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Masculinity on Women in Japan: Gender Fluidity Explored Through Literature and Performance

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**Masculinity on Women in Japan: Gender Fluidity Explored Through
Literature and Performance**

by

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**Submitted to Scripps College in Partial Fulfillment of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in
Japanese Language and Literature**

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Chapter 1: Introduction To My Topic

Masculine Women in Japan

Each society has its own definition of what gender is and how people should perform it. This determines what jobs they take on, what their role is in their families, if they have access to education, as well as how wealthy they can become. Gender, as Judith Butler has laid out for us, is a social construction. They are ideals placed onto our bodies to keep a specific order in society. These ideals take power away from certain groups while giving power and agency to others¹. A few examples of these ideals in Western society from the mid 19th century to the mid 20th century include women being made to wear dresses with crinolines² and corsets³. Despite these apparatuses damaging their bodies women continued to wear them in order to be attractive to men. Usually, these same women were not given a formal education while their male counterparts went to school until their late teens in order to take over their fathers companies, or start their own. However, in Native American culture, prior to the intervention of the West, women worked in the fields to help cultivate food for their communities⁴. While their tribes viewed this as an honor, those from the West questioned why women were doing physical labor⁵. This is a good example to show how each society has their own unique way of thinking about gender.

¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 74.

² Women still have crinolines inserted into their wedding dresses today.

³ "Crinoline," *Fashion, Costume, and Culture: Clothing, Headwear, Body Decorations, and Footwear through the Ages*, , accessed April 2, 2017, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/sports-and-everyday-life/fashion-and-clothing/clothing-jewelry-and-personal-adornment/crinoline>.

⁴ "Native American Women," *The important role of Native American women*, , accessed April 1, 2017, <http://www.indians.org/articles/native-american-women.html>.

⁵ Ibid.

Gender is how we determine who is a ‘girl’ and who is a ‘boy’. That girls wear pink, dresses and play with dolls, and that boys wear blue, pants, and get scrapes on their knees, are all attributes we assigned to someone based on their gender. Boys and girls are opposite from each other, therefore it seems natural that men and women are attracted to each other. For various, mainly procreative, reasons most people assume that heterosexuality is the norm, the status quo. In Japan, although heterosexuality is and always has been the norm, sexual fluidity, or the idea that one can be sexually attracted to people of all genders, was embraced⁶. The topic of sexuality, gender, and gender identity or expression is not one explored by many Japanese or Western scholars. Gender identity is how a person views their gender. This does not have to correspond to someone’s sex assigned at birth. Gender expression is how a person chooses to express their gender identity usually through clothes, and behavior⁷. Women's studies by Japanese scholars too is almost non-existent. Work done in either of these fields has been done mostly by Westerners.

I was first introduced to masculine women in Japan when I was studying abroad at Doshisha University in Kyoto. For my course one day I was required to read Wim Lunsing’s “The Politics of Okama and Onabe.” While the discourse surrounding okama - cross-dressing men whom perform in bars - was interesting, the discourse of *onabe*, like other discourses that fall under the general category of ‘women's studies’ seems to have been skipped over⁸. *Onabe* are women who dress and act like men, and usually work in bars and clubs entertaining other women. However, Lunsing did a good job displaying the various complexities of *onabe*. At the

⁶ Mark McLelland, "Japan's Queer Cultures," *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*, 2011., 140.

⁷ "Definition of Terms," Definition of Terms | Centers for Educational Justice & Community Engagement, accessed April 2, 2017, <http://ejce.berkeley.edu/geneq/resources/lgbtq-resources/definition-terms>.

⁸ Wim Lunsing, "The Politics of Okama and Onabe: Uses and Abuses of Terminology regarding Homosexuality and Transgender," in *Genders, Transgenders and Sexualities in Japan*, comp. Mark J. McLelland and Romit Dasgupta (London: Routledge, 2005), 81.

same time that I was introduced to *onabe*, I was also introduced to the all-female performance troupe the Takarazuka Revue. The Revue was spectacular; much how one would imagine the brilliance of Broadway and the spectacle of Las Vegas would come together⁹. Not only that but I fully believed the performance of the *otoko-yaku*, the actresses who play the men in Takarazuka's musicals and coded them as 'male'. However, at the time I was oblivious of the overlap *otoko-yaku* and *onabe* shared in their performance of masculinity and 'passing' as male.

However, the overlap between *onabe* and masculine lesbian women was already apparent. As previously stated *onabe* are women who dress and act like men, but it is different and more nuanced than cross-dressing¹⁰. Masculine lesbian women and *onabe* are both sexually deviant groups of people who are masculine of center individuals. When I was able to connect *onabe* and 'male' actors of Takarazuka, I thought about the subversion of gender and how these women lived their lives in Japan. For my thesis, I aim to research and answer: How is masculinity written, or worn, on Japanese women's bodies, both by themselves and by others; what are their struggles, both internal and external, and how do they cope with those struggles?

In order to understand the full meaning of these questions, and to answer them, we must also understand the history of women, sexuality, and the subject of gender in Japan. While the positionality of women has always been below men in Japan, they still had some right to property and wealth¹¹. Even sexuality was less regulated. In the *Tale of Genji*, Genji attempts to win over one of his friend's stepmother, Utsusemi. Although she is flattered, her duty keeps her from pursuing Genji. However Genji will not give up. He employs Utsusemi's younger brother

⁹ "THE TAKARAZUKA REVUE'S ALLURE," TAKARAZUKA REVUE Official Website, , accessed April 2, 2017, <https://kageki.hankyu.co.jp/english/about/about3.html>.

¹⁰ Lunsing, 81.

¹¹ McLelland, 140.

as a page to bring her messages for him. Utsusemi continues to reject Genji and eventually Genji sleeps with her younger brother¹². Even though it is not documented in great detail like men's affairs, it is presumed that since women usually spent their days around each other they also had sexual relationships with each other¹³. It was not until years later during the Edo Period (1603-1868) when Japan was forced to open its borders, that more stringent conceptions of gender and sexuality were introduced into Japanese society. Around this time, too, the Japanese started to view sex more procreativity than for pleasure¹⁴. While the idea that sex is mainly for procreative purposes is being dismantled, I wonder how women challenge this idea through their sexuality, gender expression, or both¹⁵.

A collection of short stories, *Sparkling Rain: And Other Fiction from Japan of Women Who Love Women*, is an example of how women have dealt with their sexuality and gives us an idea on how lesbian women have negotiated other people's gender expression. These women have written fiction centering on various topics including poems, lovers meeting up secretly, women coping to deal with the death of their parents, fantastical alternate universes with gay men, and lesbian women waging war against each other, all have a place in this collection. These stories give us a personal look into how each author views themselves and others. Considering that very little is known about the women who wrote many of these stories,, I can only hypothesize what these authors truly think of masculine women. Considering that most of these stories were originally published from what Barbara Summerhawk, the compiler of

¹² Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, Trans. Royall Tyler, (Penguin: New York, 2001),, 44.

¹³ McLelland, 140..

¹⁴ Ibid, 141.

¹⁵ Ibid, 150.

Sparkling Rain, calls “The Lesbian Press” and many more stories were unpublished, it is not surprising that we know little about these authors¹⁶.

Jennifer Robertson’s *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Pop Culture in Modern Japan* is not a primary source. However, it is one of the few pieces of literature that discusses and gives a full historical background of the all-female performance troupe¹⁷. Unless you get an insider’s view into the Revue or can read Japanese to understand the Takarazuka Music Academy’s Japan site, understanding how the Revue is successful in its reproduction of masculinity is barely within grasp. However, the performance of *Embraced by the Seas of Calista* is my primary source and I will closely analyze how *otoko-yaku* reproduce in addition to or as well as appropriate ‘male’ gender. *Embraced by the Seas of Calista* is a musical performed by the Revue in the spring of 2015, and is about liberating Calista from France in the 1700’s¹⁸. Robertson’s book gives me historical background with which to think about and examine those performances.

What I have examined is that the Takarazuka Revue is the most widely accepted form of masculinity on women’s bodies in Japan. The Revue puts on performances at both their Grand Theater in Hyogo and the Tokyo Theater in Chiyoda year-round. With their huge fan base, mainly women, the Revue has truly become a theater for the masses¹⁹. Unless you wanted an orchestra seat, tickets to see the Revue are generally inexpensive²⁰. When I saw my first Revue I was excited yet skeptical of how convincing the *otoko-yaku* performance would be. When the

¹⁶Barbara Summerhawk and Kimberly Hughes, *Sparkling Rain: And Other Fiction From Japan of Women Who Love Women* (Chicago, IL: New Victoria Publishers, 2008), x.

¹⁷Jennifer Ellen. Robertson, *Takarazuka: sexual politics and popular culture in modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 2.

¹⁸ "花組公演 『カリスタの海に抱かれて』 『宝塚幻想曲（タカラヅカ ファンタジア）』," 宝塚歌劇公式ホームページ, accessed April 2, 2017, <https://kageki.hankyu.co.jp/revue/2015/calista/>.

¹⁹ Robertson, 5.

²⁰ Orchestra seats are 12,000 yen which is approximately 107 USD.

performers came out on stage everything fell into place; I did not see women performing as men. I saw actors and actresses. Yet, when the two leads kissed I was no longer fooled. The swift, but suave turn away from the audience indicated to me that regardless of how the *otoko-yaku* performed their part, these were still women playing the part of ‘male’. Yet, why was the audience so willing to accept their performance of ‘male’ and female? What were the actors playing into that makes this performance so believable?

Onabe is another way that women in Japan perform and wear masculinity. Because of their daily performance of masculinity it is difficult for me to call them women. Their situation is interesting. Ayako Hattori says that *onabe* is a “derogatory term people in Japan have for lesbians”²¹. Her definition of *onabe* as stone butch or drag king, are too simple to encompass the full meaning and identity *onabe* can hold. A stone butch describes lesbian women whose gender expression is traditionally viewed as masculine²². Drag kings are female performers who personify male gender stereotypes, yet unlike a stone butch, nothing is implied about their sexuality²³. *Onabe* can also be seen as gender non-conforming people, or people who do not conform to society’s standards of masculinity and femininity²⁴. I also do not think we should be quick to say that *onabe* are trans men either. Trans men are men whose personal identity and gender does not correspond with their sex assigned at birth²⁵. Highlighted in the documentary *Shinjuku Boys* *onabe* identity is a complex relationship between gender identity, gender expression and sexuality²⁶. Sometimes *onabe* identify as women, trans men, or simply as *onabe*²⁷

²¹Ayako Hattori, “Heterosexism and Women’s Lives in Japan,” *Off Our Backs* 29, no 10 (1999): 1.

²²“LGBTQ Glossary,” Queer Resource Center at The Claremont Colleges, July 19, 2016, , accessed April 2, 2017, <http://colleges.claremont.edu/qrc/education/lgbtq-glossary/>.

²³ “LGBTQ Glossary”.

²⁴ “Definition of Terms”.

²⁵ “LGBTQ Glossary”.

²⁶*Shinjuku Boys*, directed by Kim Longinotte and Jano William (1995; 20th Century Vixen), DVD.

. Because of this I believe that *onabe* identity can hold a place in both trans and lesbian discourse. The documentary follows three *onabe*, and we are invited to learn about their life and how they position their gender. In *Shinjuku Boys* we learn how the *onabe* and their families have dealt with their sexuality and gender identity.

Japan currently presents itself as a homogenous society that does not have to deal with the rest of the world's problems because everyone conforms to the status quo²⁸. Non-conformation to the set path of a cis-heteronormative lifestyle in Japan can present many difficulties for people, especially women²⁹. Cis-heteronormative describes the idea that being cisgender, identifying with the sex you were assigned at birth, and heterosexual, being attracted to the opposite sex, is standard for everyone³⁰. Since Japanese society prizes men and masculinity, stereotypical difficulties for most men are easily overcome³¹. Japan is also a conformist society and individuals that complain or do not adhere to the system are seen as a nuisance. Individual expression is discouraged for the fear of burdening others³². So why do women who choose to express themselves outside of the status quo choose to face discrimination and judgement every day? If, as Ayako Hattori says, it is so difficult for women to live on their own and live the lifestyles they want to live, why do they continue to work and perform? By wearing, presenting, and performing masculinity how do these women uphold, subvert, and challenge perceptions of gender and sexuality?

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Kosaku Yoshino, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan: A Sociological Enquiry* (London: Routledge, 1992), 11.

²⁹ Hattori, 1.

³⁰ "Definition of Terms".

³¹ Hattori, 1.

³² Lunsing, 83.

Literature Review

My literature review is essentially an outline of how I will present my thesis. Here I plan to detail, outline, and argue or agree with the articles, books, and other literary reviews I have used to build my argument. The review is ordered in such a way that it also reflects the general outline of my thesis. Meaning that my literature review moves from historical background of queer culture and theater in Japan then I move onto how gender was performed fluidly in Japan. Queer is an term that attempts to encompass all non-normative sexual and gender identities³³. Afterwards I open up the discussion to include different ways to look at and analyze the short stories in *Sparkling Rain*, and the documentary *Shinjuku Boys*. Next, I explore sources that discuss gender performance and androgyny of *otoko-yaku* in the Takarazuka Revue. I refer to androgyny as a the combination of both masculine and feminine characters which makes the person performing androgyny appear as either a man or woman³⁴. With all of the various research compiled here I am able to connect masculine presenting lesbian women, *onabe*, and *otoko-yaku* discourses and how they overlap with each other. In order to understand how these discourses line up we must first explore the history in which they were cultivated in.

Mark McLelland's article "Japan's Queer Culture" presents a historical overview of queerness in the Japanese context. In his article McLelland discusses that sexuality was viewed differently prior to the United States demanding that Japan allow U.S. citizens and other Westerners to freely move within its borders. Japan did not have a word for *doseiai* which translates to same-sex love³⁵. However both men and women participated in some form of same

³³ "LGBTQ Glossary".

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ McLelland, 141.

sex relationships³⁶. After Japan was forced to open in 1853, sexology was introduced to the country. The idea of same-sex love is abnormal and it was wrong to have sex for pleasure, soon followed³⁷. In the mid-1900's queer magazines started to circulate, focusing mostly on male same-sex love. Female same-sex love was an afterthought³⁸. In the late 1960's there was a rise in the popularity of female actors playing men's roles and *onabe* bars started to open³⁹. With this the idea of transgenderism⁴⁰ and trans discourse started to become more prominent in Japan⁴¹. In this instance, when McLelland mentions "transgenderism" because he equates this with the entertainment world, I view "transgenderism" more as androgyny or gender fluidity that freely expressed⁴².

However, the Japanese view on trans people is that if you identify as trans it is still labeled as gender dysphoria disorder⁴³. For me, trans is different from "transgenderism" because I feel that trans refers to a gender variant person; someone whose gender identity does not coincide with their sex assigned at birth⁴⁴. Meanwhile, "transgenderism" refers to androgyny and gender fluidity within the entertainment world. Even though recently you can change gender and name on paper, it is only if you are unmarried⁴⁵. While his work provides great historical background to conceptualize my thesis in, I feel that McLelland could have explored the lesbian movement as well as great Japanese lesbian writers such as Sawabi Hitomi, or Wakabayashi

³⁶ Ibid, 142.

³⁷ McLelland, 141.

³⁸ Ibid, 147.

³⁹ Ibid, 148.

⁴⁰ "Transgenderism," or "transvestism" are considered outdated and derogatory terms.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid, 149.

⁴³ Ibid, 155.

⁴⁴ "LGBTQ Glossary".

⁴⁵ Ibid, 156.

Naeko. Instead McLelland skips over their involvement. He does the same with the trans issues in Japan; hinting that the issues are there, but not exploring more than legislation.

Another work that helps conceptualize my thesis is Ayako Hattori's "Heterosexism and Women's Lives in Japan" from the pamphlet *Off Our Backs*⁴⁶. Hattori discusses heterosexism in Japan, why lesbians have a difficult time coming out and living their lives independently. She says that if women are not married they are labeled as 'pre-married' women and are not seen as full citizens since they do not have husbands that can vouch for them⁴⁷. Because of this label there are lesbians who have gotten married and have had children⁴⁸. This is not only because women have a difficult time living independently and are not recognized as full citizens until marriage, but also because non-heteronormative sexual practices are looked down upon⁴⁹. While Hattori explains well the issues women in Japan face if they choose to live independently, she rarely discusses masculine lesbian women. However, in many of the firsthand accounts transcribed in *Queer Japan* the women have discussed that they felt they needed to get married, and because living on their own was difficult⁵⁰. Although the McLelland and Hattori pieces do not necessarily focus on gender performance or masculinity on women's bodies, their pieces give important background on both how women are suppressed and queer culture in Japan. Lastly, they provide a framework in which to examine both the firsthand accounts transcribed in *Queer Japan*, but also the works of *Sparkling Rain*.

⁴⁶ Hattori, 1.

⁴⁷ Hattori, 5.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 6.

⁵⁰ Barbara Summerhawk, Cheiron McMahon, and Darren McDonald, *Queer Japan: personal stories of Japanese lesbians, gays, transsexuals, and bisexuals* (Norwich, VT: New Victoria Publishers, 1998).

In order to fully examine the *otoko-yaku* of Takarazuka I not only need the historical background of Takarazuka but a background of women within the Japanese theater. Eric Prideaux's article discusses women being banned from the *Nō* stage in the early 20th century and after the ban was lifted how it continues to be difficult for women to become *Nō* actors⁵¹. Not unlike Kabuki, which started out as an art form that was performed only by women, *Nō* is also a male-dominated world⁵². It was not until after the World War II that women were allowed to apply for professional status for *Nō*. One of the actresses noted that "we've been granted this entry, but that doesn't mean we're allowed to do just anything"⁵³. This mimics the sexism that still runs through Japanese society today, which gives women an extra step with which to obtain those very same goals as men.

Prideaux also notes that because of the blood from menstruation and childbirth women are viewed as impure. To this day women continue to be barred from certain rituals, rooms, and sometimes even from wearing certain costumes⁵⁴. Prideaux critiques this notion by recognizing that the creators of *Nō*, Kan'ami and Zeami, learned the *kusemai*, a dance central to most *Nō* dramas, from a woman. Prideaux presents the question that if women were able to contribute to *Nō* beforehand, why can they not continue to do so today? Today, professional female *Nō* actresses are taking on other female apprentices so that they may pass the tradition of *Nō* on to them⁵⁵. The actresses know they have a long way to go before they have women's *Nō*. Looking at *Nō* this way helped me contextualize Takarazuka, and Takarazuka's history within the history of

⁵¹Eric Prideaux, "Women in noh," The Japan Times, , accessed March 28, 2017, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2004/04/11/to-be-sorted/women-in-noh/#.WPm2fdLytPY>.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Japanese theater. By focusing on women in *Nō*, and how their place on the stage was taken away from them, we can adequately see why Takarazaka being female-only is important.

Susan Chira introduces the new exhibit called “Third Gender: Beautiful Youths in Japanese Prints” where she discusses Japan’s sexual fluidity in the Edo period. The exhibit displays the sexual fluidity once granted in the Edo period prior to the tightening of sexual morals through the adaptation of Western mores⁵⁶. *Wakashu*, boys who have just entered puberty, have had the sides of their heads partially shaven and were seen as the epitome of beauty in the Edo period⁵⁷. But after Japan was forced to open its borders after being threatened by Commodore Matthew Perry, the Japanese started to adopt Western technology, and more rigid forms of sexuality and gender⁵⁸. Commodore Perry was a Commodore in the United State Navy sent to Japan so that the United States could start to expanded economically into the East⁵⁹. The regulations on sexuality and gender gave women less freedom. It also denounced sex as an act that was pleasurable which made it an obligation for married women. The regulation also made sex be only for procreative reasons⁶⁰.

Unlike Chira, I would say that *wakashu* are not a third gender within Japanese history and would not equate to two-spirit individuals from Native American tribes. Two-spirit individuals are either female-bodied or male-bodied individuals that were respected in their tribes and could take on whatever roles they wished⁶¹. *Wakashu* are different from this because they were still

⁵⁶Susan Chira, "When Japan Had a Third Gender," The New York Times, March 10, 2017, , accessed March 11, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/10/arts/design/when-japan-had-a-third-gender.html>.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹Commodore Perry and Japan (1853-1854) | Asia for Educators | Columbia University, , accessed April 17, 2017, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan_1750_perry.htm.

⁶⁰ “When Japan Had a Third Gender”.

⁶¹"Two Spirit 101," Native OUT, , accessed April 2, 2017, <http://nativeout.com/twospirit-rc/two-spirit-101/>.

viewed as young men. For a portion of some young men's lives in Japan, they would become *wakashu* allowing them to engage in sexual relationships with whomever they wanted. They were able to participate in activities that were not necessarily coded as masculine⁶². This was a portion of their lives where gender fluidity was permitted⁶³. They were desirable and highly sexualized, but once they developed more maturity the *wakashu* would be reincorporated back into society as men.

A source that helps me discuss the literature from *Sparkling Rain* is Michiko Suzuki's article "Writing Same-Sex Love: Sexology and Literary Representation in Yoshiya Nobuko's Early Fiction"⁶⁴. Her article focuses on Yoshiya Nobuko, a lesbian writer famous for her vignettes discussing same-sex love, short stories and how she develops lesbian identity and love through them. She uses sexology as her main approach and discusses the two lesbian troupes presented in literature: passionate friendship, and *ome* which was seen as abnormal⁶⁵. *Ome* is a term denoting a lesbian relationship where a masculine presenting woman, who was viewed as abnormal, would seduce a heterosexual woman⁶⁶. *Ome* relationships were seen as relationships where "masculine women corrupt and transmit same-sex desire to the non-masculine (therefore normal) woman" and therefore seen as a threat to the Japanese heteronormative society⁶⁷. Suzuki goes into great character analysis, which helps me analyze some of the characters from *Sparkling Rain* I feel, however that a lot of her analysis is repetitive.

In the past masculine lesbian women and their relationships were viewed as abnormal, or

⁶² "When Japan Had a Third Gender".

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Michiko Suzuki, "Writing Same-Sex Love: Sexology and Literary Representation in Yoshiya Nobuko's Early Fiction," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 65, no. 03 (2006):

⁶⁵ Ibid, 578.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 579.

as *ome*⁶⁸. Today there are still masculine lesbian women, most of them existing in Tokyo's Shinjuku ni-Chome *onabe* bars⁶⁹. In Wim Lunsing's essay, he presents information on the terminology surrounding sexual and gender identity in Japan⁷⁰. Lunsing's essay also touches on internalized homophobia of Japanese men and women. Internalized homophobia is the process by which a person who identifies as non heterosexual or as not cisgender comes to believe and accept stereotypes presented about their group thus hindering that individual's ability to accept themselves as who they are⁷¹. This stems from the Japanese being taught from an early age that they must deal with their problems individually so as to not burden others⁷². This thinking promotes the idea that if someone is gay, lesbian, trans, or any other deviant sexuality or gender identity, they should not tell their friends or family because of the group mentality that is prominent in Japan⁷³.

Lunsing also discusses *onabe* and the divide in the *onabe* community concerning the definition of *onabe*. In New Marilyn, an *onabe* bar, women who dress and act like men can work there⁷⁴. They can identify with the term *onabe*, lesbian, trans or whatever – in the documentary *Shinjuku Boys* the three *onabe* work at this club⁷⁵. In another club they will only let those who have undergone a full medical transition work there⁷⁶. In other words the second club only sees “real *onabe*” as people who have access to the resources needed to have a full medical transition and does not allow the freedom for others to identify as *onabe*⁷⁷. Lastly, a common theme which

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Lunsing, 81

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ “LGBTQ Glossary”.

⁷² Lunsing, 83.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 89.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 90.

surrounds my thesis is that Lunsing's discussion of *onabe* and lesbians is smaller than his discussion on okama and gay men. This stems from a system of oppression and belief that in Japan women's issues are taken less seriously than men's.

Ikuko Sugiura's *Lesbian Discourses in Mainstream Magazines of Post-War Japan* also gives historical background of *onabe*, however, unlike Lunsing she connects lesbian and *onabe* identity formation. Sugiura's article starts from the sixties when lesbian literature was first published in Japanese mainstream media⁷⁸. From this we discover that the term *onabe* was not considered a separate identity from lesbian until the 1980's. Furthermore, *onabe* discourse started when the mainstream discovered more masculine lesbians whom they called *tachi rezubian* or male role players⁷⁹. *Tachi rezubian* means a lesbian womans whose gender expression is masculine⁸⁰. The opposite of *tachi rezubian* is *neko*, or a lesbian whose gender expression is traditionally feminine⁸¹. There were two types of *tachi rezubian*. The first were women who dressed and acted more masculine. The second had the same aesthetics as *tachi rezubian*'s but worked in bars and would entertain other women and became known as *onabe*⁸². Sugiura helps develop my idea of what *onabe* is and how it is separate from lesbian identity.

The idea of gender as performance is not limited to the world of *onabe*. For centuries men and women in Japan have been performing roles that do not coincide with their sex assigned at birth. In her article Erica Abbitt explores the past and present performative body in Japan

⁷⁸Ikuko Sugiura, "Lesbian Discourses in Mainstream Magazines of Post-War Japan," *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 10, no. 3-4 (2007): 134.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 137.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 131.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid, 139.

through Takarazuka⁸³. Abbitt's argument is that androgyny is a tool to explore the supposedly fixed points of gender through the exploration of Takarazuka's musical performance of *The Rose of Versailles*, *Elizabeth*, and *The Bacchae*. The women in these performances perform a sort of gender slippage that is greater than enacting gender and androgyny through clothes⁸⁴. Her reading of the performance of Oscar and Elizabeth by female actors, and how they stretch and redefine gender, create a space for me to interpret the performative bodies of both *onabe* and Takarasienne. The idea of gender slippage and the performance of masculinity on the Takarazuka stage is further developed in Robertson's book. She discusses the concept of androgyny in the theater as both liberating and harmful to constructions of gender in Japan⁸⁵.

Robertson's book *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* is her theory on how Takarazuka fits into sexual discourse in Japan, and the theater's place in popular culture. In her chapter "Staging Androgyny" Robertson discusses the concept of androgyny in the theater as both liberating and harmful to constructions of gender in Japan⁸⁶. The *otoko-yaku* of Takarazuka both subvert and uphold strict gender norms⁸⁷. Yet by performing masculinity on and off the stage they appropriate and disrupt the idea of 'man' by carrying male gender on their female bodies. I aim to use Robertson's ideas of how *otoko-yaku* perform 'male' to develop the idea of queering gender. By passing as 'man' the Takarasienne's keep intact stringent gender roles. Yet by passing as 'man' and having a nearly all female fan base they have subverted those roles by being seen as cis-heteronormative women and have therefore queered

⁸³Erica Stevens Abbitt, "Androgyny and Otherness: Exploring the West Through the Japanese Performative Body," *Asian Theatre Journal* 18, no. 2 (2001).

⁸⁴ Ibid, 252.

⁸⁵ Robertson, 54.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 52.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

gendered.

Through the various works explored above, we can see that despite strict rules placed to keep regulate gender and sexuality in Japan, lesbian women, *onabe*, and *otoko-yaku* continue to perform and subvert gender norms. Gender and sexual fluidity are not new concepts in Japan. They are expressions that became less acceptable for Japanese people to practice⁸⁸. By looking at masculine women, *onabe*, and *otoko-yaku*, with the help of these works, I hope to provide insights as to how gender and sexuality continue to be fluid in Japan.

Further Explorations

I will be comparing and contrasting the stories of masculine lesbian women, *onabe*, and examining Takarazuka's *otoko-yaku* in order to draw conclusions about how these women construct their gender and sexual identity as well as how they have dealt with their struggles resulting from how they identify. There are many reasons why women would choose to dress masculine. If they wish to be taken more seriously in a world dominated by men, perhaps dressing more and acting more like a man has allowed these women to be taken more seriously at their work places. Another reason to dress more masculinely could be that is how these women feel most comfortable. Perhaps dresses, and skirts and other clothes society ascribes to women are not what these women feel help them express themselves fully. In a society that prides itself on homogeneity, not just surrounding race but also surrounding sexuality and other identities, why would women choose to break the status quo? If challenging norms in Japan is so difficult and looked down upon⁸⁹, then why actively choose to be put at the bottom of society?

⁸⁸ McLelland, 141.

⁸⁹ Lunsing, 84.

For lesbian women who choose to dress and act more masculine, these questions are more nuanced. Would it not be easier to dress femininely?

In Chapter 2, I plan to discuss and contextualize both Japan's queer and theatrical history. In order to fully understand where masculine lesbian women, *onabe* and *otoko-yaku* fit into current and past discourses, we need to understand Japan's past view on women, sexuality and gender and what influences might have changed it. In the first section of Chapter 2, I will be discussing Japan's queer history from the Heian Era (794 - 1185) to as recent as 2002 when the Japanese Diet passed a law that allowed trans individuals to change their sex legally⁹⁰. In the second section of Chapter 2, I will discuss and investigate the history of Japanese theater and how women have been involved in it. This investigation starts with *Nō* since this is the first form of Japanese classical theater recorded to have women influencing it ending with a look at modern Japanese theater⁹¹. We have to look at past forms of theater to understand why Takarazuka is only female, and the difficulties most female actresses have in Japan. We also have to look at Japanese history in order to understand how people view non-normative gender expression.

For Chapter 3 I will discuss and analyze masculine characters in Japanese lesbian literature, and *onabe*. As Jessamyn West says, "fiction reveals the truth that reality obscures" than the stories from *Sparkling Rain* will reveal, or hint at what the authors who wrote the short stories think of masculinity on women's bodies⁹². I will do a close examination of three stories from *Sparkling Rain*. The first story "Sparkling Rain" by Kaho Nakayama tells the story of the bittersweet final months of an old lesbian couple and recounts the days when the couple first met

⁹⁰ McLelland, 156.

⁹¹ Tamotsu Kokubu, *Understanding Japan: Japanese theater* (Tokyo: International Society for education information, 1972), 12.

⁹² "Jessamyn West Quotes," BrainyQuote, , accessed April 21, 2017, <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/j/jessamynwe104333.html>.

⁹³. The second story “Monalisa Night” by Maruo Izumo follows two Japanese lesbians, one in New York, the other in Japan, and their adventures clubbing in these places⁹⁴. The last story is “Junko’s After School Project” by Natsuko Mori which depicts Junko’s, the protagonist, secret love for her senior classmate⁹⁵. The three stories reveal how women take on masculinity and how it is read by others. Since *onabe* can be defined as lesbian women who dress and act like men, and their discourse came out of lesbian discourse, I will be discussing them in the second section of Chapter 2. I will discuss the documentary *Shinjuku Boys*, which follows three *onabe* who work at the *onabe* bar New Marilyn, and attempt to answer the question: What is *onabe*? Can we define the term *onabe* and why is it important that *onabe* are choosing to perform masculinity every day and not identify as women? In the end I hope to answer how do the short stories from *Sparkling Rain* and the *onabe* from *Shinjuku Boys* reflect upon the acceptance of masculinity on women?

In Chapter 4 I will be discussing and examining the *otoko-yaku* who perform in Takarazuka. Their performance of masculinity is different from *onabe* because after the actresses leave the Revue they no longer perform ‘male’⁹⁶. For section one of this chapter, I will briefly review the history of Japanese theater, focusing on modern theater. I want to focus here on theater that had women acting in it before the Edo Period. In the second section, I will give a history of the Revue and discuss its importance in mass media and the performance of masculinity on the stage. The last section of this chapter will be an examination of the *otoko-yaku* from Takarazuka. I will use both Robertson and scenes from the Takarazuka musical

⁹³ Summerhawk, 185-200.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 57-72.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 73-8.

⁹⁶ Robertson, 5.

Karisuta no Umi ni Hakarete, Embraced by the Seas of Calista, in order to closely read their performance of gender. Here I question how the Revue challenges gender. Do they challenge gender by performing as ‘male’ or are they simply upholding gender norms? And like masculine women and *onabe*, what does their continued performance of masculinity reflect about masculinity being worn by women?

Finally in Chapter 5 I will stage my concluding remarks on gender, and masculinity in Japan. Since Japan is very much a groupthink society I believe it is going to take a while before Japanese people will be willing to connect the overlap between masculine lesbian women, *onabe*, and the *otoko-yaku* from the Revue. While Sugiura has discussed the previous overlap between lesbian and *onabe* discourse, she sees them as separate entities. I believe we need to reconnect them. After that it will still take work, but an overlap must be drawn between them and Takarazuka. Furthermore, Takarazuka needs to be connected with the queer movement. However, since Takarazuka prefers to be mainstream, they work within the norm and not support the queer communities.

Chapter 2: History of a Queer Japan, and Japanese Theater

The first aim of this chapter is to explore queerness, sexuality, and gender fluidity in within Japanese history. Queer is an umbrella term that attempts to encompass all non-normative sexual and gender identities; gender fluidity is the idea that one's gender expression or identity can change⁹⁷. Gender identity is how a person views their gender. This does not have to correspond to someone's sex assigned at birth. Gender expression is how a person chooses to express their gender identity usually through clothes, and behavior⁹⁸. The first section of this chapter will explore these topics starting from the Heian Period (794-1185) onward. The second goal of this chapter is to explore women, and gender performance in Japanese theatrical history, so that we may understand why Takarazuka is performed the way it is. As we will see these two histories are not entirely separate and there is some overlap. By exploring both Japan's queer, and theatrical histories I hope to bring to light why discussing gender performance, expression, and identity in Japan is still important today.

Japan's Queer History

In order to fully understand how lesbians who are present masculinely have dealt with their gender expression being atypical we have to explore the historical context in which Japan has inscribed gender onto bodies. This will help us understand why gender, gender expression, and sexuality is viewed in Modern Japan. Although it is hard to collect records of same-sex love, or erotica, prior to the Edo Period, when woodblocks made literature and information widespread, we can look at literature to collect evidence. The earliest record of same-sex sex that I could find was in Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji*. Murasaki wrote her novel sometime in

⁹⁷ "LGBTQ Glossary".

⁹⁸ "Definition of Terms".

the 11th century during the Heian Period (794-1185). We know from art and literature of the time that women and men were kept separate from each other in different quarters, but that does not necessarily mean that men did not have affairs with women⁹⁹. Still, there are records of men having sex with other men that can be found; furthermore it was speculated that because of the separated quarters women also had sex with each other¹⁰⁰.

Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji* is one of the example from the Heian Period of men pursuing the company of other men. In the chapter "The Broom Tree" Genji attempts to sway the wife of the Iyo Deputy, Utsusemi. Although the attraction is quite apparent Utsusemi feels that she cannot let herself be swayed by Genji because of her duty as a wife¹⁰¹. After being told by Utsusemi's younger brother, whom Genji employed as his page, that his sister will not receive him, Genji has the boy "lie down with him"¹⁰². Although this can be interpreted two ways, one being that the boy is only sleeping next to Genji, or lying down can be coded language as having sex with the boy. Genji even finds the boy to be "so pleasing" as he was "small and slender to the touch, with quite short hair, he resembled his sister," so it would not be surprising if Genji slept with his page simply because Genji was replacing his sister with the boy's body¹⁰³. In Seidensticker's translation Genji is a bit more aggressive as he "pulled the boy down beside him"¹⁰⁴. The aggressiveness with which Seidensticker translates this scene confirms the idea that sex between men was a carnal act meant to fulfill their sexual desire, and not romantic one¹⁰⁵. As stated before not much is known about same-sex love between women, however, considering

⁹⁹ Mark McLelland, 140.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, Trans. Royall Tyler, (Penguin: New York, 2001), 40.

¹⁰² Ibid, 44.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 47.

¹⁰⁴ Murasaki Shikibu and Edward Seidensticker, *The tale of Genji* (New York: Knopf, 1972), 48.

¹⁰⁵ McLelland, 143.

that women were taken less seriously than men, it makes sense that there is no documentation of it if there way any.

Continuing onto the Edo Period (1603-1867) in Japan there was an increase in the circulation of literature including but not limited to erotic prints or *ukiyo-e*, and *kibyoshi*¹⁰⁶¹⁰⁷. *Ukiyo-e* are woodblock prints that focus on the pleasure aesthetics of the floating world in Edo. A recent article in the New York Times references work from this period while exploring an exhibition that opened in mid-March at the Japanese Society called “A Third Gender: Beautiful Youth in Japanese Prints”¹⁰⁸. The exhibition explores *wakashu*, or adolescent boys who were seen as the epitome of beauty and were sexually available to both men and women, show another way that the Japanese were open to sexual and gender fluidity¹⁰⁹. These prints show men and women engaging in rough sex, women dressing up as *wakashū* and enticing customers, *wakashū* are also seen playing the koto or openly entertaining people in feminine arts like flower arrangement¹¹⁰. Much like the earlier periods lesbian, and same-sex love among women were continuously overlook. However, this is not a surprise considering that women come second to men in Japanese society. Even to this day Japan’s hetero-patriarchal society, a society that privileges both heterosexuality and men¹¹¹, continues to put women second, making difficult for women to live on their own, and if they are married make it hard to get divorced and only give certain rights to women who are married¹¹². Because cis-heterosexuality, the idea that being

¹⁰⁶ *Kibyoshi* are visual-verbal woodblock prints circulated in the Edo Period that were sometime pornographic, and are different from *ukiyo-e* which were erotic prints.

¹⁰⁷ Adam Lewis Kern, *Manga from the floating world: comicbook culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Asia center, 2006), 132.

¹⁰⁸ “When Japan Had a Third Gender”.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ “LGBTQ Glossary”.

¹¹² Hattori, 6.

cisgender and heterosexual is standard for everyone,¹¹³ is so ingrained into Japanese society women buy into the myth that they “can’t and must not decide their own lives” and if they do they are viewed as abnormal and are not treated with respect¹¹⁴. However, in 1853 Commodore Perry arrived from the United States and forced Japan to become a country with open borders¹¹⁵. With Japan becoming an open country, Western ideals, practices, sciences, technologies, etc. were able to enter into Japan. With those ideals, sexual fluidity among the Japanese started to diminish.

During the Meiji (1868-1912) and Taishō (1912-25) Era is when the import of Western ideals of heterosexuality, marriage, and sex was brought into, and adopted by the Japanese. In 1909 Mori Ōgai, an army doctor, studied in Berlin and published a novel called *Vita Sexualis*. *Vita Sexualis* was the first novel to have sexuality, specifically homosexuality, as a central theme, this lead Japan to reexamine what they defined as normal and perverse sexuality¹¹⁶. For the first time in Japan male-male same-sex love was defined and translated as *dōseiai*. This coupled with sexology, and the increased the interest in grotesque-erotic nonsense as same-sex love labeled homosexuality as perverse¹¹⁷. Even though the term can encompass same-sex love between men, and women, according to McLelland since female same-sex love is seen as more emotional and spiritual the *doseiai* has more lesbian connotations¹¹⁸.

Furthermore, the love between women, that was overlooked in the Edo Period, also became increasingly interesting to the media. Single-sex dorms of unmarried female factory

¹¹³ “Definition of Terms”.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ McLelland, 141.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ In Japanese the kanji for *ai* denotes more emotional and psychological love, whereas *koi* represents a more carnal or erotic love

workers, and in the Takarazuka Revue were places where people thought there were a lot of same-sex relationships occurring¹¹⁹. The idea that same-sex relationships were perverse started to receive negative coverage in the media. There were love suicides at female higher education dorms that labeled certain females as abnormal and others as normal. Not only that but sexology labeled certain female relationships as traditional, innocent and natural. These relationships were not sexual, but instead strong bonds that female students made in order to fully mature. On the other hand, the perverse, sexual relationships that occurred between women were the ones that ended in love suicides. However, usually one woman was labeled the victim because she was a normal woman who was tricked by an abnormal, usually more masculine woman, into a same-sex relationship¹²⁰.

Even though after World War II Japanese society seemed to have looser ideals of sex, now no longer just a paradigm for procreation but a new way to seek pleasure, sex and sex advice was still defined through heterosexuality¹²¹. Although, previously in Japanese society sex for pleasure was understood and practice concept, magazines discussing sex for pleasure dove into other sorts of ‘queer’ or perverse sex topics¹²². These sex topics sometimes covered queer sex practices, but most of the time gave reason to pathologize and persecute those who practice non-heteronormative sex practices. However, as McLelland notes negative medicalization of these subversive desires were not as popular in Japan as they were in the United States. Accounts in Japanese magazine’s were upbeat and even had ‘expert’ opinions inserted into them showing the openness to learning about other sex practices¹²³.

¹¹⁹ McLelland, 142.

¹²⁰ Suzuki, 579.

¹²¹ McLelland, 146.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

Still these magazines were meant for, and assumed that their readers were heterosexual therefore eroticizing queerness, since these articles were just to inform readers of non-heterosexual sex¹²⁴. Around the 1950s queer magazines started to circulate as well. These magazines, along with the opening of gay bars were used as a way to organize among the gay community in Japan¹²⁵. The magazines were subtle enough that you could pick them up discretely, and usually had flyers in them telling gay men when and where organized meetings were held¹²⁶. Although the male sexuality seems to have been openly discussed in Japan, lesbain love, or lesbos love, was seen as an afterthought¹²⁷. Once again female sexuality took a backseat to the discussion of male sexuality¹²⁸. However, in the late 1960s there was a rise in popularity among female actors playing men's roles, and women dressing up as men, this was followed by a number of *onabe bars* opening up in Ginza, Shinjuku ni-chome, and Roppongi¹²⁹. The opening of lesbian and *onabe bars* gave space for lesbian women to meet and organize, which lead to lesbian discourse entering the women's liberation movement by the mid 1970s¹³⁰.

One of Japan's first lesbian groups that organized politically was founded in 1971 and was called *Wakakusa no Kai*. Like many other lesbian groups *Wakakusa no kai* after attempting to enter the Japanese feminist movement the group disbanded after several years. Another reason for the group's disbandment was the leader's, Suzuki Michiko, treatment of it's members. She upheld the strict view of treating members with respect to whether or not they were classified as

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 147.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Hattori, 1.

¹²⁹ McLelland, 148.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

neko, a lesbian whose gender expression is traditionally feminine,¹³¹ and *tachi*, a lesbian womans whose gender expression is masculine¹³². The members of the group thought this classification upheld the same cis-heterosexual standards that they were trying to escape¹³³. Other groups such as Regumi, founded in the late 1980s, and Phryne, founded in 1995, also tried to dive into the feminist movement, by holding meetings and publishing magazines for lesbian and bisexual women¹³⁴. However, because of how difficult it was, and continues to be, for some women in Japan to hold jobs¹³⁵ and have a disposable income to spend on the publications, the group's publishing magazines disbanded in the mid 1990s early 2000s¹³⁶. *Phryne* disbanded and reopened in 1997 as *Anise*, although it failed for a while it recommenced in 2001, and is now the longest running lesbian publication¹³⁷.

One of the last topics to be explored by scholars is the trans community in Japan. While cross-dressing and androgyny has been expressed rather freely within the entertainment world, the Japanese view of trans people is medicalized as a “gender identity disorder,” meaning that an individual is just confused as to their correct gender¹³⁸. However, the government has voted that unmarried trans individuals can change the gender and name on paper¹³⁹. By having “reassignment” surgery, and currently on hormones this bill also furthers the medicalization, and pathologization of trans identity.

¹³¹ Ikuko Sugiura, 131.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Summerhawk, 9.

¹³⁴ McLelland, 149.

¹³⁵ Hattori, 5.

¹³⁶ McLelland, 150.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 156.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

History of Japanese Theater

Although the views on sexuality and gender have changed in Japan, as we have seen these topics are not new to Japanese society. Sexual and gender fluidity were once accepted practices in Japan. Because Takarazuka is a modern theater form where it's all-female performers act as men, it is important to look at how gender was performed in the past and what roles women had in classical Japanese theater. Before Takarazuka and other forms of modern theater was created *Nō* and Kabuki are the most heavily influenced by women and explore gender fluidity. Other forms of theater such as *bugaku*, *kyogen*, and *bunraku* will not be discussed here since the influence of women, and exploration of gender fluidity was very little.

Nō drama is a form of traditional art in Japan, however unlike *bugaku*, *Nō* is still performed today, and there are records of women acting in *Nō* dramas. *Nō* is probably the most well know traditional Japanese theater¹⁴⁰. But it's long and slow, highly stylized movements and development have been lost and underappreciated by Western audiences. Because of *Nō*'s long chants in classical Japanese, it is even hard for Japanese people to understand. So before they go see the plays Japanese people, or people who can read Japanese try to familiarize themselves with the scripts so they can appreciate the art style¹⁴¹. The art of *Nō* has been a tradition passed down throughout generations. Typically it has been from father to son, but women were able to perform in *Nō* as well. Even Kan'ami and his son, Zeami, who wrote¹⁴² a majority of *Nō* plays and are considered the founders of *Nō* as we know it today, learned *Nō* dances from a woman¹⁴³.

¹⁴⁰ Kokubu, 27.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 28.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 31.

As stated before women were allowed to act in *Nō*, in the 20th century, along with the tightening of sexual mores from the West, so was the freedom of women. Although women could no longer act in *Nō* professionally and perform for audiences, they were still allowed to practice *Nō* as a hobby¹⁴⁴. Even though now they are allowed to act in *Nō* that is not to say that women do not face stigma and hostility when attempting to perform the art. Tomiyama, a *Nō* actress stated that “We’ve been granted entry, but that doesn’t mean we’re allowed to do just anything”¹⁴⁵. It is hard for a *Nō* actress today to gain full recognition in her art because the men that they perform with will not let them near certain costumes or props, which keeps the women from performing certain roles¹⁴⁶. However, despite setbacks from male colleagues women are still continuing to challenge old standards and perform in *Nō*.

The second form of classical theater that was heavily influenced by women, and also explored and expanded the idea of gender performance was Kabuki. Kabuki started around 1603, and is probably the most well know Japanese theater. Kabuki is distinguished by its elaborate costumes with modern colors. Usually traditional yet modern looking kimono are worn, and movements in kabuki are like those in *Nō* are highly stylized, and actors also wear masks but actors also use makeup to convey who they are¹⁴⁷. What makes kabuki different from *Nō* is that is started out with women acting both men and women roles¹⁴⁸. In 1629 the Shogunate was disturbed by the level of prostitution that was happening around the women in Kabuki, he considered them to be “harmful to the public”¹⁴⁹ so he banned women from the stage¹⁵⁰. In their

¹⁴⁴ “Women in Noh”.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Kokubu, 59.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 67.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 66.

place young prepubescent boys, who were androgynous and beautiful looking¹⁵¹, called *wakashu* would play *onnagata*¹⁵². These *wakashu* were sexually available to both men and women¹⁵³, and because of their attractiveness people would fight over the *wakashu* for sexual favors¹⁵⁴. Soon afterwards *wakashu* were also banned from the Kabuki stage so then men started playing *onnagata* by wearing masks and painting their faces¹⁵⁵. Performative gender fluidity was not new to the stage, however, with the increasing surveillance of gender and sexuality in Japan as it opened up and modernized, these performances increasingly became limited to the stage.

As Japan started to modernize, its theater also started to change. Modern drama like Shimpa, New School, and Shingeki, or New Drama, was created and was modeled after European forms of drama in the late 1800s to early 1900s¹⁵⁶.

Shimpa, translated as New School was founded in 1888. The way in which it modeled European theater was that it dealt with war and battle scenes that glorified the nation. For the first time since the ban created in the Edo Period on women performing on stage, women were allowed to act in these plays¹⁵⁷. However, the flow of Shimpa performances was similar to Kabuki. The old performance style meshed with the new themes of action and nationalism did not prove to be very popular, and the theater failed¹⁵⁸. Shingeki, or New Drama, was founded around 1900, and was even more similar to European drama than its predecessor Shimpa. Shingeki started to perform plays like Ibsen's "Doll House," and Chekhov's "The Three Sister's"

¹⁵¹ "When Japan Had a Third Gender".

¹⁵² Kokubu, 66. *Onnagata* means women's roles in Japanese.

¹⁵³ "When Japan Had a Third Gender".

¹⁵⁴ Kokubu, 71.

¹⁵⁵ Robertson, 218.

¹⁵⁶ Kokubu, 97.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 98.

¹⁵⁹. Shingeki was so popular that different groups started to perform and compete for audiences; They even used female actresses instead of *onnagata*¹⁶⁰.

After both Shimpa and Shingeki were created, another form of theater that only used women to act was founded in 1913 by Kobayashi Ichizō was created. Kobayshi created Takarazuka Revue and viewed it to be a counterpart to Kabuki, since all the actors in Kabuki are male, and all actors in Takarazuka are female. The irony of this is that Kabuki was originally made, and played by women. The Revue is known for it's Rococo style theater. Now the style of the theater seamlessly mixes the fantastic style of Broadway with hints of Rococo theater weaved into it. Now the Revue does remakes of classic Japanese tales such as *The New Tale of Genji*, or *Shin Genji Monogatari*, and modern Western plays such as *West Side Story*, or *Chicago*¹⁶¹. Even though the Revue performs modern interpretations of Japanese folktales and Western musicals, they also create their own. However, these musicals like *The Rose of Versaille*, *Embraced by the Seas of Calista*, and *Elizabeth* are usually set in European settings, as a way to excotize the West and transport their audiences to faraway worlds¹⁶².

The Takarazuka Revue still performs today, with women acting both men's and women's roles as *otoko-yaku*, actresses who play the men in Takarazuka's musicals, and *musume-yaku*, the actresses that play women's part for the Revue¹⁶³. The *otoko-yaku* that perform in these shows are the highlight of the musicals as they perform androgyny. They perform androgyny so well that female fans have even sent love letters to *otoko-yaku*¹⁶⁴. Because of ban placed on

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Robertson, 27.

¹⁶² Ibid, 28.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 15.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

women previously and sexism in Japan, Takarazuka was not always this popular. And when the Revue first opened up the women who were acting in it were looked down upon and as corrupt. A school registry even took a top star off their graduation registry because they did not want her to be associated with their school¹⁶⁵.

Concluding Thoughts on Gender in Japanese Culture and Theater

As we can see gender fluidity, along with fluid sexuality is all part of Japanese history, both theatrical and cultural. While the literary works on these topics are limited, the ones that I have found outline the ways in which Japanese women carry and transform masculinity on their bodies, however it is still a topic that needs to be further explored. I will be coupling the stories from *Sparkling Rain* with first hand accounts from *Queer Japan: Personal Stories of Japanese Lesbians, Gays, Transsexuals and Bisexuals* in order to examine how queer women cope with their own masculinity. In *Queer Japan* lesbians describe how they came to terms with their own sexuality and how they coped with being sexually perverse in Japan. I will also be using the documentary *Shinjuku Boys* so that I may compare and contrast onabe and *otoko-yaku*, and masculine lesbian women. Gender is a construct that is imposed on us from the time we are born, the women that are able to play with androgyny see this and are able to move freely between the spectrums of what society defines as strictly man and woman.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 29.

Chapter 3: Perverse Sexualities and Gender Expressions

My first goal for this chapter is to discuss how masculine lesbians are presented in lesbian literature. Since the characters created in these short stories are both lesbian and masculine presenting, what do the authors construction of these characters say about how women can and should express their gender. Because *onabe* were assigned female at birth, dress and act as men do, and usually love other women what separates them from masculine lesbians¹⁶⁶? Both have subvert gender ideals by performing masculinity and have non-normative sexualities. They are in this chapter together because both of their identities can fall under the umbrella term queer. Therefore, the second objective for this chapter is to define, discuss and explore the identity of *onabe*, and figure out what their daily performance of masculinity, how the *onabe* have come to terms with their identity say about gender expression and fluidity.

Masculine Lesbians in Lesbian Literature

In *Sparkling Rain: and Other Fiction from Japan of Women Who Love Women* is an anthology of lesbian fiction that discusses sex, sexuality, gender, gender expression, family, community, and homophobia. While each short story may not deal with all of these topics, each story shows us different ways in which characters situate themselves. I will be looking at three stories, all of which deal with masculinity in one way or another. “Sparkling Rain” describes how an older lesbian couple meet and what they overcame to be with each other. In Maruo Izumo’s “Monalisa Night” follows independent women in their mid to late twenties that are active in the lesbian club scene. Lastly, Natsuko Mori’s vignette “Junko’s After School Project” is about a secret love that a high school junior has for her senior.

¹⁶⁶ Lunsign, 89.

“Sparkling Rain” differs from the latter two stories in that the love between the two main characters is already fully realized, and Yukino and Itsuko are partnered and retired. The two meet in their late thirties; Yukino is married and has a son, Yoshiyuki, and Itsuko is Yoshiyuki’s art teacher at school¹⁶⁷. They meet because Yoshiyuki hit his teacher because his girlfriend has fallen in love with his art teacher; he is not angry about her sexuality, but rather a jealous teenager. Itsuko tells this to Yukino, and Yukino realizes her own attraction to her son’s teacher right away. She notes that Itsuko is “dressed in a casually stylish manner that was altogether different from the stereotypical image of a teacher” and that her demeanor is so completely refined - so coolly suave - that she practically approached the point of standoffishness¹⁶⁸. This is the only physical description of Itsuko we are given and words like “suave” and “standoffish” are not typically used to describe women, these traits are more masculine than feminine.

Secondly, Itsuko’s tastes are also masculine. The art teacher drives a red sports car, and the scent of her perfume was “neither feminine-smelling like [Yukino’s] own, nor masculine like a man’s cologne. Rather, it hinted of something in-between”¹⁶⁹. Even though it is just perfume, Itsuko’s choice of this “in between” perfume hints at androgyny. Not only is Itsuko demeanor more masculine in an attractive way, but so is her style. Yukino falls in love with Itsuko because of their emotional connection, which develops as Itsuko paints Yukino for month, but at first Yukino is attracted to Itsuko’s play with gender. Itsuko is neither feminine nor masculine but rather she is androgynous. Her coolness is not intimidating, it approaches “standoffishness” but

¹⁶⁷ “Sparkling Rain,” 186.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 187.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 188.

is not quite there yet¹⁷⁰. Itsuko plays with gender in an acceptable way; she is not too masculine, but she is also not feminine. In “Sparkling Rain” it appears there is an acceptable amount of masculinity a woman can wear on her body for Itsuko to still be attractive. Perhaps if Itsuko were more masculine Yukino would not accept her as a lover but see her as someone who is abnormal, and does not want to associate with. Although this story reflects less on how gendered is performed by either Yukino or Itsuko, it shows Yukino’s fears as a woman in Japan, fears that are shared by some women who either want to live independently, or with their female partner. Even though “Sparkling Rain” has less to do with gender than “Monalisa Night” or “Junko’s After School Project,” Kaho Nakayama provides us with an example of how masculinity on Japanese women that is acceptable, and she highlights how Japanese male-dominated society hinders women in their search for happiness and love.

Izumo Maruo’s “*Monalisa Night*” follows the lives of long-distance lesbian couple, Kiyomi, who is currently working in New York, and Yuri who is Kiyomi’s freeloading, college-aged girlfriend. The story starts off following Kiyomi in New York at what she classifies as a “tough dyke bar” called Crazy Nannies¹⁷¹. While there she meets a Japanese-American lesbian named Hana, who despite her tough looks, is extremely self-conscious about herself. Although Kiyomi finds herself attracted to Hana’s impressive muscles, she is not attracted to the person that Hana is. Hana has “sun-browned skin” and she is overconfident, even if she tells Yuri she is shy, her personality is overbearing¹⁷². Even though Kiyomi was slightly attracted to Hana because of Hana’s muscles she notes, “Cruelly, those prized biceps made her look round-shouldered,” hinting that although her muscles are impressive, and a way to attract

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 187.

¹⁷¹ “Monalisa Night,” 57.

¹⁷² Ibid.

women, in the end they are too much on Hana's body¹⁷³. Afterwards Hana rants to Kiyomi about how she is ugly without her muscles, and even though Hana's ex-girlfriend left her for a "prim white woman" she could never get rid of her muscles because they are what gives her confidence¹⁷⁴. Although we do not know how Kiyomi looks, we can presume from her declining attraction to Hana, that Kiyomi finds Hana's masculine features - dark skin, large muscles, gym obsession - to be undesirable.

Yuri, Kiyomi's girlfriend in Japan with whom she has a romantic relationship with, also goes out that night to Club Monalisa with her friends. Yuri meets an American women, Yasmin, whom she notices on the dance floor¹⁷⁵. Other than being tall, Yuri describes Yasmin as an "alcohol-soaked American butch" who would be "popular with the Japanese women"¹⁷⁶. A butch is lesbian women whose gender expression is viewed as masculine¹⁷⁷. Even when Yuri and Yasmine are kissing and having sex the adjectives used to describe Yasmin are positive and fun. For instance, although Yasmin is butch her features are soft, including her hair and skin¹⁷⁸. As Yuri and Yasmin are making love in Yasmin's hotel room, she is a "soft and naked, wildly feline" that is giving Yuri a lot of pleasure¹⁷⁹. Lastly, the next morning before Yasmin leaves for Kyoto, the two chat.

When we compare Hana to Yasmin it seems as though Izumo Maruo is hinting that masculinity on Japanese women, even if they are Japanese-American, is unappealing and not desirable; however, on other women, specifically white women, not only is it attractive, it is

¹⁷³ Ibid, 58.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 59.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 62.

¹⁷⁷ "LGBTQ Glossary".

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 54.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 65.

socially acceptable. Even after Kiyomi leaves Crazy Nannies she has to shake of “Hana’s persistent advances”¹⁸⁰. Hana does not know when to stop, or when the person she is talking to is disinterested. Even though Kiyomi finds muscles on women pleasing, Hana, as a butch Japanese-American is too overbearing for Kiyomi to continue to find her attractive. However, Yasmin, is someone who Yuri find attractive. Although we never get a sense of how Yuri and Kiyomi present, if we look at Yasmin and Hana, we can already sense that masculinity on Japanese women is not seen positively. The idea that masculinity on Japanese women is “overbearing” continues in Mori Natsuko’s short vignette “Junko’s After School Project”.

“Junko’s After School Project” is about a high school girl’s unspoken crush on her *senpai*¹⁸¹. Her *senpai*, Saionji Shizuka is the epitome of femininity. “Ah, Miss Shizuka, so beautiful and pure of heart! My own white lily!” Junko introduces Shizuka to the reader¹⁸². Shizuka is presented to us as someone who is graceful, beautiful, innocent, and humble¹⁸³. Junko, who refuses to admit her feelings for Shizuka are more than admiration, sees Shizuka as a someone others should strive to be. And people like Junko’s friend Rei, and Miyako, who is the president of the body building club, are the type of women one should avoid.

In *Hatsukoi no Monogatari: Koukou no Nikki*¹⁸⁴ Makoto documents her realization of her first lesbian love. In Makoto’s first year of high school a girl named Yoko transfers to her school. Yoko and Makoto become close friends, yet a one point Yoko starts to ignore Makoto. So starting second semester of high school Makoto starts “watch her go by silently”¹⁸⁵. This reflects

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 68.

¹⁸¹ *Senpai* in Japanese is used as a signifier for social status in interpersonal relationships. In this vignette it is used to express that Shizuka is a third year high school student, and Junko is in her second year

¹⁸² “Junko’s After School Project,” 73.

¹⁸³ Lilies are the flower of innocence, devotion and humility

¹⁸⁴ Trans. *High School Diary: Days of My First Love*

¹⁸⁵ See Appendix A.

how Junko secretly watches and obsesses over Shizuka. Makoto is hesitant to talk about, or recognize her feelings for Yoko; even when she does recognize her feelings for Yoko she does not want these feelings to be true. She even goes to the library to find a reason as to why she feels this way towards Yoko. Unfortunately, she finds a magazine with an article by Freud discussing homosexuality, and if this continues into adulthood Makoto will have what Freud calls an “abnormal spirit”¹⁸⁶. Because of this article she thinks she’s abnormal and tries her best to not respond to her feelings.

However, Rei thinks that her friend Junko should pursue her feelings. Junko’s description of Rei further expands the idea of masculinity, or in Rei’s case “boyishness,” is not attractive on Japanese women. Although Rei’s haircut is “becoming” and she is popular with the first year students, Junko finds her behavior “crude,” “over-familiar” and “annoying”¹⁸⁷. When Rei finds that Junko is once again staring at Shizuka playing the piano she chimes in that she “wouldn’t mind playing around with her [Shizuka] sometime” to which Junko thinks to herself that Rei is a “boorish lout”¹⁸⁸. Since Rei is acting like an “uncivilized male” and gives into her sexual desire by pursuing underclassmen, Junko finds her to be “boorish” and “beastly”¹⁸⁹. Not only are her mannerism and style boyish, she is sexually active and curious which is the opposite of Junko and Shizuka who are innocent and pure¹⁹⁰.

Another masculine character in “Junko’s After School Project” is Kira Miyako who is known as the Amazon since she is the president of the body building club at Junko’s school¹⁹¹.

¹⁸⁶ See Appendix A.

¹⁸⁷ “Junko’s After School Project,” 73.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 74.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 75.

¹⁹⁰ For further reading that details lesbian love in high school see Appendix A.

¹⁹¹ *Sparkling Rain*, 75.

Miyako's features are described as animal-like, and not in a fun, sexy feline way like Yasmin from "Monalisa Night". Miyako is extremely tall for a Japanese woman at 5 feet 9 inches, her muscles are always on display, and her hair is a thick mane, "wavy hair right down to her hips" which gives her lion-like qualities¹⁹². In this sense Miyako is more like Hana than Rei, too masculine for a Japanese woman to the point where she is almost not human. Miyako is also into BDSM¹⁹³. Junko wants to 'save' Shizuka from the two 'abnormal' people. Michiko Suzuki defines abnormal as a more masculine woman who has the "power to corrupt and transmit same-sex desires to the non-masculine (therefore normal) woman," which is how Junko views Miyako¹⁹⁴. And so, justifying that she, is pure and would not have the sexual desires of Rei and Miyako, Junko is still able to be labeled 'normal'. Junko's love and protection for Shizuka is viewed as, by Junko, as "passionate friendship"¹⁹⁵. Junko is not the an butch like Rei and Miyako, so her desires are given legitimacy. Junko's wants to save Shizuka from walking down a sexually deviant path¹⁹⁶.

Through their fiction we see the authors reactions to heteropatriarchal gender ideas. In "Sparkling Rain" we see fears shared among the women in Japan who wish to be independent embodied in Yukino. Itsuko, unlike Rei or Hana, the ideal amount of masculinity on her body. In "Monalisa Night" it is reflected that masculinity on Japanese women, even if they Japanese-American, is too much, and the woman is often compensating for a trait she does not have. For Hana, her muscles give her confidence, and although her muscles are attractive, Hana

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Aside from women in Japan being taught that sex is only for marriage, and the fact that non-normative sexuality is a taboo in Japanese society, BDSM also does not carry positive connotations in Japan. BDSM stands for: Bondage/Discipline, Domination/Submission, and Sadism/Masochism

¹⁹⁴ Suzuki, 579.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 588.

is too butch and her muscles take away from her feminine posture and round her shoulders¹⁹⁷.

However, we also learn that masculine on white women is not only acceptable, but white women who are masculine can still be feminine and fun. Lastly in “Junko’s After School Project” both Rei and Miyako’s masculinity is too much, and their sexually curiosity makes them dangerous to women like Shizuka who are heterosexual women.

Each of these stories treats masculinity and androgyny in a different ways. The first story, “Sparkling Rain” Itsuko presentation is not necessarily seen as harmful, or negative. However, in *Monalisa Night* the “featureless” white woman at the club catches Yuri’s eye, Yasmin’s butch characteristics are attractive and enticing to Yuri, whom she spends the night with¹⁹⁸. On the other hand, in New York, Kiyomi meets Hana, a Japanese-American who is obsessed with exercising and her muscles. While at first Kiyomi finds these muscles attractive she does not find Hana’s personality attractive, in fact it is too much for Kiyomi to handle¹⁹⁹. This shows that masculinity is not an acceptable form of expression on Japanese women’s bodies. Furthermore, in *Junko’s After School Project* both the masculine characters, Rei and Miyako, are put down by Junko. Not only are they unattractive, but they are sexually deviant and completely unaccepted by Junko. In their treatment of masculinity these stories give the varying degrees of acceptance of masculinity performed by Japanese women. Furthermore, we can see that boyishness, and more masculine qualities - strength, confidence, sexual curiosity and prowess, and various physical attributes - are seen as negative traits on Japanese women.

¹⁹⁷ “Monalisa Night,” 58.

¹⁹⁸ *Sparkling Rain*, 59.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 58.

Examination of *Onabe*

“[I] felt that my gender did not suit me, but at last I realized I didn’t want to try to be either masculine or feminine. I grew disgusted with myself for having enjoyed dressing up in men’s clothes at times. I began to think that i wanted to be myself, no matter what I wore or how I acted.”²⁰⁰

- Kirara, *Queer Japan*

I start with the quote above because not only do I think the sentiment is shared among women whose gender expression, how a person chooses to express their gender identity usually through clothes, and behavior, does not fit their gender identity, how a person views their gender, which does not have correspond to someone’s sex assigned at birth²⁰¹. *Onabe* are women who dress and act like men, and like Kirara, a lesbian who wrote for *Queer Japan*, *onabe*’s gender expression does not align with their gender identity, or the sex they were assigned at birth. While the lesbians created in the short stories from *Sparkling Rain* can reveal to us some way in which masculinity is viewed on women’s bodies, looking at *onabe*, who are also queer individuals, dress masculinely and date other women, can reveal more to us about how women have dealt with performing masculinity and what that has meant for them. Japan is a groupthink society, so therefore identifying outside of the bounds Japan’s cis-heteronormative society, a society that privileges heterosexual and cisgender people²⁰², operates under, creates not only a burden for you, but for others as well²⁰³. While there are people like the lesbians constructed in *Sparkling Rain* whose gender expression does not match their gender identity as women, there

²⁰⁰ *Queer Japan*, 28.

²⁰¹ “Definition of Terms”.

²⁰² “Definition of Terms”.

²⁰³ Lunsing, 81.

are other people like *onabe* who feel that there they are not women, or that ‘woman’ only encompasses part of their identity²⁰⁴.

In order to talk fully about *onabe* discourse we need to understand terminology that surrounds trans discourse since trans discourse encompasses identities of people who do not identify as cisgender²⁰⁵. Cisgender refers to someone who views their sex assigned at birth and gender as the same²⁰⁶. What this means is that women who identify as ‘woman,’ or ‘girl’ and were assigned female at birth, are cisgender individuals. Trans denotes a person whose self-identity does not conform to conventional notions of male or female gender²⁰⁷. Just because a person identifies as trans does not necessarily mean that that person identifies within the gender binary. *Onabe*, for Lunsing, connotes a lesbian woman who is masculine in character and gender presentation; it can also mean that that person is also gender non-conforming²⁰⁸. Gender non-conforming refers to a person who does not conform to society’s expectations of gender expression based on ideas of masculinity and femininity²⁰⁹.

Onabe discourse started when mainstream media in the 1960s discovered more masculine lesbians whom they called *tachi rezubian* or male role players²¹⁰. There were two types of male role players: one was women who dressed and acted more masculine, and the second had the same aesthetics but worked in bars and entertained other women - the second become known as *onabe*²¹¹. Most *onabe* now do work in clubs and bars. Within these clubs and bars there is a

²⁰⁴ *Shinjuku Boys*.

²⁰⁵ Lunsing, 90.

²⁰⁶ “Definition of Terms”.

²⁰⁷ “LGBTQ Glossary”.

²⁰⁸ Lunsing, 89.

²⁰⁹ “Defintion of Terms”.

²¹⁰ Sugiura, 131.

²¹¹ *Ibid*, 135.

discussion about what truly defines *onabe*. In one *onabe* bar called Apollo, they said that they would not hire anyone that had not undergone top surgery, or were not on hormones²¹². And that the people who claimed they were *onabe* who had received neither of those were not *onabe* but simply cross dressing women²¹³. However this keeps certain people who do not have the means to undergo full-medical transition from identifying as *onabe*. Other bars, like New Marilyn, believe that those who identify as *onabe*, and have the *onabe* aesthetics, regardless of medical status, they will hire those *onabe*²¹⁴. The narrator of *Shinjuku Boys* says they are women who have decided to live as the ‘ideal’ man²¹⁵.

Shinjuku Boys is a documentary that follows three *onabe* that work at the club New Marilyn. The three *onabe*: Gaish, who is described as being a playboy, Kazu, described by their peers as the lovable type, and Tatsu, who Kazu believes is the most masculine out of the *onabe* that work at New Marylin²¹⁶. How they discuss their lives, as *onabe*, their childhood, and their relationship with their families, displays how the identity *onabe* is different for everyone.

For instance Gaish, thinks they are absolutely detestable as a woman²¹⁷. However, they do not want to be viewed as a real man either. They say that since childhood they have always been more masculine and living as an *onabe* has always seemed natural to them²¹⁸. Gaish enjoys seeing women outside of work, however when they have sex they do not like to take off their clothes. Gaish does not want their partner to view them as a woman, so they take on a more masculine role in bed. For instance they are making their feel pleasure, not the opposite way

²¹² Lunsing, 89

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ *Shinjuku Boys*.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

around. This is similar to Yuri's experience with Yasmin in "Sparkling Rain". When their having sex Yuri has to make an effort so that Yasmin will let her reciprocate during sex²¹⁹. Gaish also thinks that if the woman comes back asking for more than Gaish says "Ah, I've fooled her" and they are accepted as a man²²⁰. The thought that they are accepted as a man, is also one that is shared with masculine lesbian women. Saho Asada says that "When I was younger, I took on a *tachi* role to love heterosexual women,"²²¹ and that she had "loved many women, but to many of them, I was just a phase, a substitute for a man"²²². The pseudo acceptance of other women of both Gaish's and Saho's masculine bodies proves that their deviant gender expression is viewed as a cover, and simply temporary for their counterparts. *Onabe* is a complex identity that for Gaish means they can be who they want, neither man nor woman. Gaish's feelings of not being either male or female is a feeling shared among their co-workers.

Another *onabe* that the documentary follows is Kazu. In the opening scene of the documentary Kazu is seen binding their chest while getting ready for work²²³. Kazu thought "I am really a man" because they didn't get their period until later in life and when they did it was horrible²²⁴. Kirara from *Queer Japan* wrote that they too felt that "getting my period was nothing but a burden ... I found my body, bent on becoming that of an adult woman, to be an abomination"²²⁵. Both Kazu and Kirara did not want to become a woman, for Kirara that meant they could not do the activities they enjoyed, and that her guy friends started to look at her differently. For Kazu, that meant becoming something that they did not want to become. And for

²¹⁹ "Sparkling Rain," 68.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ *Queer Japan*, 136.

²²² Ibid, 135.

²²³ *Shinjuku Boys*.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ *Queer Japan*, 21-2.

both of them having their period made them not human, since their gender expression did not fully match their biological gender, they could not see themselves as man or woman. Lastly, Kazu tries to have a relationship with their mom and sends her flowers for mother's day. When they talk on the phone Kazu's mom says that "People are different, I can't tell you how to live. No good living unhappily. Just stay in touch"²²⁶. It seems that Kazu's mom wants what is best for Kazu, and although she does not understand Kazu's lifestyle, she is happy if Kazu is. And unlike most parents in Japan does not seem to pressure Kazu into marriage. Gaish and Kazu identity seem to be situated more in the middle of what society's definition of what man and woman is. Although their gender expression is more masculine, they do not identify as men which is different their co-worker Tatsu²²⁷.

The last *onabe* that *Shinjuku Boys* follows is Tatsu. Out of all three of the *onabe*, Tatsu is the most masculine looking in terms of idealized masculinity, and is the only one of the three to identify as both an *onabe* and trans man. Trans men are men whose personal identity and gender does not correspond with their sex assigned at birth²²⁸. We first meet Tatsu as he is getting his hair cut by a barber. The barber is asking Tatsu about his hormone treatment, and they joke about Tatsu developing facial hair, which Tatsu is excited to start growing²²⁹. While the barber continues to ask Tatsu questions about his hormone treatment, it is hard to know if the barber is taking Tatsu seriously when he keeps chuckling while he asks questions, even though Tatsu is answering them seriously. Although, the barber is not interviewed and we do not the full scope of the barber and Tatsu's relationship, from this scene in the documentary from how he asks

²²⁶ *Shinjuku Boys*.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ "LGBTQ Glossary".

²²⁹ *Shinjuku Boys*.

Tatsu questions it seems as though he is slightly uncomfortable with the idea that Tatsu is trans²³⁰

Tatsu also has a girlfriend, Tomoe, their relationship is very important to Tatsu as it helped him accept himself for who he is²³¹.

Tomoe is young and feminine and calls Tatsu ‘he’. They live together and share the housework and chores. Tatsu like his co-workers hated sex before Tomoe, and he would never take his clothes off. But with Tomoe, Tatsu felt that he could take his clothes off and has been able to accept his body²³². At the end of their conversation about sex Tomoe says, “*Tatsu ha Tatsu,*” meaning “Tatsu is Tatsu”²³³. Out of all the *onabe* interviewed for this documentary Tatsu, the only trans identified *onabe*, seems to have the most self-acceptance. He is able to have sex, and although he does not have a relationship with his family, he seems to be happy with his life. The other important factor is that his girlfriend has accepted his masculinity; Tomoe takes Tatsu as he is, and loves him for him. Tatsu and Tomoe, and Kazu and their mother’s relationship display how important it is for queer people to have someone in their life that accepts them for they are.

Generally after a long time and dealing with the idea of masculinity on themselves and what presenting masculinely means for them, it seems as though all three *onabe* have come to terms with their identity. Although for Gaish I’m not sure they are happy with their body, however they feel that living as an *onabe* is natural for them. As for family, Tatsu never mentions his, but Kazu and Gaish do. In terms of acceptance, Gaish does not, and probably will

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

not have a great relationship with their family. They claim that as a child they were not loved, and that lack of love and commitment has carried over into adulthood for them. They see themselves as not being good enough to love. As for Kazu it seems that their mom is open and willing to have a relationship with them. Even though Kazu mom has not fully accepted Kazu's lifestyle as an *onabe*, she cares deeply about Kazu, and for Kazu that seems to be a relief.

As seen from *Shinjuku Boys*, *onabe* is different for everyone who identifies as one. It can encompass trans discourse and lesbian discourse. *Onabe* encompasses a wide range of masculine identities, however more than likely those who identify as *onabe* were most likely assigned female at birth. Although, *onabe* most likely work at bars that is not to say people who identify as *onabe* do not work regular day jobs. Although the *onabe* identity can include lesbian identity too, we should, however, consider *onabe* discourse separate from lesbian discourse. It has been separate from the 1980's, *onabe* were *tachi rezubian* who entertained women in bars and clubs, now they also encompass trans identities and discourses²³⁴. Furthermore, similar to how in the United States and Western trans rights movement, *onabe*, and other trans identities are often forgotten within the mainstream story and discourse of Japan's queer rights movement²³⁵.

Final Comments on Masculinity and Women in Japan

In both their fiction and their first hand accounts translated in *Queer Japan* there are varying degrees of how women choose to identify. Most of the women in *Sparkling Rain* were feminine women, at least the women who were telling the stories were. However, within the short stories compiled in *Sparkling Rain* there are masculine women, and usually within those stories their bodies are judged and demeaned because they are different. Even the more

²³⁴ Sugira, 128.

²³⁵ For a further description of *onabe* and *onabe* bars please see Appendix B.

masculine women such as Kirara in *Queer Japan* had a difficult time being accepted by others because of her masculinity. While people praised her for being like a boy they were also pointing out to her that she was not, and her body reminded her of that when she first started to menstruate²³⁶. Growing up too she felt that she was rejected by women because she was not masculine enough, yet perhaps it had more to do with her partners internalized homophobia, and adherence to Japanese society that made Kirara not an ideal partner for them.

Onabe too are cast to the sides as people in Japan. You are likely to find *onabe* in the entertainment district in Tokyo at Shinjuku ni-Chome, which historically was a red-light district. Their daily performance of gender, usually at night in *onabe* bars, is a fun way for them to make money and entertain other women. Their identity as ‘woman’ however, is not so simply placed. While historically their identity was linked to women as *tachi lesbians*, but later this identity split into two and the identity of *onabe* was created²³⁷. Everyday by choosing to live as *onabe*, usually independently from their families like the three *onabe* in *Shinjuku Boys* they are subverting the norm set up for them by Japanese society. Sometimes the *onabe* in the film do not even identify as ‘women’. Their view of what gender is is more fluid than ‘man and woman’. While their parents may still view them as their daughters, they view themselves as *onabe*, a gender that is not simply pointed out. If we had to equate *onabe* to Western queer discourse, the closest word I can think of is gender non-conforming, or GNC. More often than not gender non-conforming people see gender as something to be played with and manufactured. They can go in between male and female and present androgynously, or they can dress masculinely and wear make-up

²³⁶ *Queer Japan*, 27.

²³⁷ Sugira, 134.

and have braids, or wear skirts with unshaven legs. *Onabe*, like gender non-conformity, can also have implications about one's sexuality, and can also be included in trans discourse.

Chapter 4 – Performing Masculinity in the Takarazuka Revue

My goal for this chapter is to discuss the performers and performances that the Takarazuka Revue put on. First I will start out with a brief discussion and re-introduce Japanese theater and the history of women in it. This is so we can understand how the Takarazuka Revue was created and why it is a theater unique to Japan. Then I will introduce a brief history of Takarazuka Revue, the rigorous process it takes to become an actress in the Revue, and how it could become so popular. My hope in doing is that we will understand the importance of the construction of *otoko-yaku* who are the actresses that play the men's role in the Revue. Lastly, so we can fully understand how *otoko-yaku* perform masculinity on the stage I will do analysis of several scenes from the Takarazuka Musical *Karisuta no Umi ni Hakarete*, or *Embraced by the seas of Calista*. Because *onabe* and *otoko-yaku* both perform gender as a form of entertainment I will compare *otoko-yaku*'s situation to *onabe*'s.

Women in Japanese Theater

Like most traditional art forms that still survive in Japan, it is dominated by men. One of traditional art forms that continues to have prestige today *Nō*. Women could act in *Nō*; Zeami and Kan'nami, the father and son duo that are named for creating modern *Nō*, learned dances and chants from women *Nō* actresses²³⁸. It was not until the twentieth century and the adoption of Western ideals that women were banned from the stage²³⁹. Even though women are allowed to act today and apply to professional *Nō* schools, they still have a difficult time finding a place for themselves among a world dominated by men with sexist ideals such as: women are not allowed to play certain parts or touch certain instruments²⁴⁰.

²³⁸ Kokubu, 31.

²³⁹ "Women in Noh".

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

After *Nō*, Kabuki was introduced as the next form of acting and performance and became very popular. Currently Kabuki is dominated by men but the art was started out by women of the floating world who acted both men's and women's roles²⁴¹. The Shogunate thought that the performances were too provocative, especially because of the level of prostitution that surrounded the performances²⁴². After women were banned from the Kabuki stage, young boys known as *wakashu* started performing Kabuki²⁴³. Soon after they started performing Kabuki they too were also outlawed because of the prostitution²⁴⁴. Afterwards men started playing men's and women's roles and they become known as *onna-gata*²⁴⁵. "Males could perform openly as females on the Kabuki stage and also live as women off stage. Females who appropriated masculinity as a social guise were criminalized after the adoption of Western ideals. This became the motif, and women's freedom started to be constrained, and sexual fluidity became less practiced in Japan."²⁴⁶

The first form of modern theater was an awkward mix of European theatre tradition called Shimpa, with themes of war and nationalism and the highly stylized, slow movements and chants of kabuki²⁴⁷. It was founded around the 1890's but the theater quickly failed²⁴⁸. Shingeki, also known as New Theater, was founded in 1900 and was more popular than its predecessor Shimpa. Essentially, Shingeki was European realist theater, portraying the downfalls of modern

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid, 66.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 71.

²⁴⁵ Robertson, 218.

²⁴⁶ Ibid, 52.

²⁴⁷ Kokubu, 96.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 97.

life through works such as Ibsen, Chekhov, and Gorky²⁴⁹. Both Shimpa and Shingeki were the first forms of theater since the ban which prevented women from acting on stage during the Edo Period. For years androgyny had been played with by actors and actresses, and has “provided a tool with which to explore the gaps between supposedly fixed points”²⁵⁰. This probably explains why *onna-gata* in kabuki were so popular - they played the “slippage” between their biological gender and the roles they performed on stage²⁵¹. This could also be why *otoko-yaku* are so popular today. The female actors perform ‘male’ through the guise of androgyny, the combination of both masculine and feminine characters which makes the person performing appear as either a man or woman, and in the end fool the audience with their performance²⁵².

What is Takarazuka Revue?

In 1913, thirteen years after Shingeki started, Ichizō Kobayashi, entrepreneur and owner of the Hankyu Corporation, created Takarazuka. Kobayashi created the Revue as in contrast to Kabuki which had only men actors performing both women, in masks or heavy makeup, and men²⁵³. In April of 1914 Kobayashi put on the Revue’s first performance with twenty young women²⁵⁴. His hope since Japan’s “emergence of middle class culture organized around new conceptions of family life and leisure”, for the Revue was that it would be “wholesome family entertainment”²⁵⁵. Over the years the Revue’s name has changed to reflect the extent of its audience. It started out as Takarazuka Choir, then Takarazuka Girls’ Opera, and since the 1920s

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Abbitt, 251.

²⁵¹ Ibid, 250.

²⁵² “LGBTQ Glossary”.

²⁵³ Robertson, 4.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid, 5.

has been called Takarazuka Revue²⁵⁶. Today Takarazuka actresses are called “Takarasienne” after the French Parisiennes since the early Revue was influenced by French revue²⁵⁷.

In 1919 Kobayashi opened a two-year academy to train young women to become Revue actresses. This academy is called the Takarazuka Music Academy. In 2017 the Takarazuka Music Academy accepted applications from girls between the ages of 15 - 19. Their education requirements being that they had to at least have graduated middle school²⁵⁸. The Takarazuka Music Academy trains students in western and Japanese theatrical arts. It has male supervisors to reassure families their daughters are under constant supervision²⁵⁹. Robertson speculates that most girls come from affluent families since the application process is extremely competitive. Because of its competitiveness, most aspiring Takarazuka actresses attend private singing and dancing lesson so that they can have a greater chance of being accepted into the academy²⁶⁰.

Kobayashi created the academy with the idea that he would be training girls to go back into society and get married. They would be cultured by all the high arts they would learn at the academy and would be able to be “good wives and wise mothers”²⁶¹. Now the academy trains aspiring actresses in various types of art such as singing, acting, ballet, modern and tap dance, Japanese classical dance, piano and tea ceremony²⁶². It is almost ironic that the goal of the school is to create mothers and wives since half of their graduates become *otoko-yaku* and perform masculinity daily²⁶³. In the middle of this rigorous two-year curriculum, the girls are assigned to

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ 宝塚音楽学校, , accessed March 31, 2017, <http://www.tms.ac.jp/>.

²⁵⁹ Robertson, 8.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, 9.

²⁶¹ Ibid, 8.

²⁶² 宝塚音楽学校, , accessed March 31, 2017, <http://www.tms.ac.jp/>.

²⁶³ Robertson, 19

become a specialist in either the *otoko-yaku*, actresses who play men, or *musume-yaku*, actresses who play women's role in the Revue²⁶⁴. No matter what role the actresses are assigned they must learn certain gender roles so that they can perform adequately on stage. If they are *musume-yaku* they are hyper-feminized in the sense they are taught to act more femininely through gesture and speech to contrast the masculinity that is being performed by the *otoko-yaku*²⁶⁵. On the other hand if an actress is assigned to be an *otoko-yaku* her hair is cut short, and she is taught how to dress, walk, talk and even sing more masculinely²⁶⁶.

A Review of *Otoko-yaku*

“Gender is an effect of culturally coded markers of behaviors and style that are only presumed to be natural attributes of one sex rather than the other, then passing as feminine pertains to males and females equally, as does passing masculinity”²⁶⁷

As mentioned before, the Revue splits its actress into two, *musume-yaku* and *otoko-yaku*. Based on physical and sociopsychological criteria such as height, physique, facial shape, voice, and personality, actresses are given a another gender to practice and perform²⁶⁸. Most of the criteria, however, is based off of stereotypes and Western ideals of male gender. In their time at the Takarazuka Music School, actresses go through a process of ‘re-gendering’ such as stylized gestures, dress and speech patterns. And while they are off-stage, *otoko-yaku* are expected to keep up the façade of ‘man’. They continuously dress, talk, and act like young men. If androgyny is the combination of both masculine and feminine characters which makes the person performing androgyny appear as either a man or woman, I surmise that *otoko-yaku* are not

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 15.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Robertson, 39.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 12

performing ‘man’ they are performing masculine androgyny²⁶⁹. *Otoko-yaku* scramble ”gender markers, in a way that both challenges the stability of a sex-gender system premised on male (masculine)/female (feminine) dichotomy,” but at the same time they also uphold stringent gender norms and privilege masculinity²⁷⁰. The femininity learned by *musume-yaku* serves as a way to highly contrast the *otoko-yaku*’s masculinity²⁷¹. The gender performance learned by the *otoko-yaku*, and even *musume-yaku*, is best explained through a discussion of how they perform gender during their musicals. I am going to look at a few scenes from their musical *Embraced by the Seas of Calista*. I will be looking at the Charles, the protagonist, and a few other *otoko-yaku* performance of masculinity, and how *musume-yaku* performance of femininity contrast to the *otoko-yaku*.

Embraced by the Seas of Calista is a musical the Revue performed in the spring of 2015. The musical takes place in pre-revolutionary France, and Calista is an island that has been colonized by France. Charles, the main protagonist, was born on Calista twenty years prior to the start of the story, but his father made him move to France where Charles was groomed into a military commander. Charles visits Calista because his new post is as the general of the island, but secretly wants to help Calista liberate themselves from France. Their chance to do this comes soon and with the help of Napoleon, Charles was able to attain Calista’s independence from France.

When Charles first comes on stage he is reminiscing about Calista and how happy he is to return. Since he walks across the stage before exiting and claims the space as his own, Charles is

²⁶⁹ “LGBTQ Glossary”.

²⁷⁰ Ibid, 47.

²⁷¹ Ibid, 59.

able to make the stage of the Grand Theater seem as if it is too small for just one person²⁷². His face is a dark tan from the makeup used to erase *otoko-yaku* features so that they can embody signs of idealized masculinity, and be in contrast to the *musume-yaku*'s whiteface²⁷³. Charles' make-up also contours his face to emphasize his cheekbones and make them look more defined²⁷⁴.

In scene four in *Embraced by the Seas of Calista* Charles goes to dance at Governor Brienne's mansion so that he may properly introduce himself in front of French aristocracy²⁷⁵. In this scene it is through Governor Brienne's daughter Isabella's, exaggerated femininity, that makes Charles becomes more masculine. Isabella is an aristocratic girl whose feelings are not reciprocated by Charles. When Charles enters the party, Isabella interrupts her parents dancing to inquire who is the handsome young man who just arrived. Governor Brienne's husky voice, and harsh mannerism are juxtaposed by his wife Cecilia's gentle voice when she attempts to calm him and remind him of his duties by saying '*anata*, ' or dear. In this scene the Governors' arms move farther away from his body emphasizing his posture, his shoulders are squared, legs apart, and his face conveys that he is annoyed²⁷⁶. Next we see Charles, Governor Brienne, Cecilia and Isabella standing in a line facing the audience. The two *otoko-yaku* are taking up the most space with their feet spread apart, square shoulders and stern faces making the audience understand they both have an agenda. "The audience's enjoyment of this slippage is central to the effectiveness of androgyny as a theatrical technique ... the beautifully made-up male-role

²⁷² "【宝塚歌劇】 2015年 花組『カリスタの海に抱かれて』／『宝塚幻想曲.," YouTube, , accessed December 8, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adB65x3JqsE>.

²⁷³ Robertson, 190.

²⁷⁴ "【宝塚歌劇】 2015年 花組『カリスタの海に抱かれて』／『宝塚幻想曲".

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

performer of the Takarazuka Theater is not *meant* to be taken for a man but is specifically designed to be enjoyed as woman”²⁷⁷. Meaning that Rio Asumi’s performance of Charles is not seen as ‘man,’ but as a woman with no bound playing ‘man’ for other women’s entertainment. Like Itsuko from “Sparkling Rain,” and Gaish and Kazu from *Shinjuku Boys*, Rio Asumi performance of Charles is androgynous because as she wears and performs an exaggeration of masculinity, the audience is aware she is a woman, but presents as man.

After the general makes a toast and is conversing with Charles, Isabella starts making her way over to the two men, who were left alone by her and her mother to discuss politics. However her path to Charles is impeded upon by Marius, Charles’ adjutant, asks Isabella to dance. Once again, the *otoko-yaku* are taking up the most space; Marius has his arm out wide, literally creating a wall in Isabella’s way. Although Isabella really wants to dance with Charles, she gives in and bows towards Marius. Her gesture is slow and delicate as she brings her hand to her chest, each of her fingers cascades to create a light fold in her hand²⁷⁸. The only time Isabella seems to have any agency is when she politely excuses herself from Marius to go dance with Charles. However, she gives her agency away when she asks Charles, “Won’t you please let me dance with you?”²⁷⁹.

From the time they start dancing until the camera pans over to Isabella’s parents thirty seconds later, Charles and Isabella are immediately put on opposite ends. First, Isabella asks permission to dance with Charles. When they start to dance the colors of their clothes instantly clash. Isabella is wearing a bright pink dress that flows as she walks across the stage against Charles’ stiff, dark blue military uniform. Secondly, Charles’s skin is darker than Isabella - both

²⁷⁷ Abbitt, 252.

²⁷⁸ “【宝塚歌劇】 2015年 花組『カリスタの海に抱かれて』／『宝塚幻想曲』”.

²⁷⁹ In Japanese this would be asked using the causative-passive form of a verb.

Isabella and her mother have powder on their faces to make them appear whiter²⁸⁰. As they discuss Charles's new post as the General of Calista, Isabella's voice raises at the end of her sentences when she asks questions. She lets us know that when she and her family visit the island of Calista, her father will not let her go outside because the island is dangerous and its residents "savage". Isabella does not mind that she is not allowed outside. She dislikes the way the sea breezes. Lastly, Isabella's gestures are exaggerated so that her counterpart does not have to work hard to pass as masculine; *otoko-yaku*'s performance is accepted as 'male' by the audience not only because they are performing masculine qualities, but because *musume-yaku* exaggerate their femininity²⁸¹. In this way Charles's "Gender is a property of attribution and convention, and not anatomy," meaning that the *otoko-yaku* playing Charles lack of masculinity is pointed out through her performing 'Charles'²⁸². Another example of gender performance is prominent in *Embraced by the Seas of Calista* are through the lyrics, and performance of songs.

Twice in *Embraced by the Seas of Calista* there is a musical duet²⁸³ between Charles and Alisha, the top *musume-yaku* and Charles's love interest, called "Kore ga Koi"²⁸⁴. This song highlights the "'purity' of the couple's impossible love" since Charles is part of the French aristocracy that is suppressing Calista, and Alisha is one of the "savages" that inhabits the island²⁸⁵. Their love story follows the typical trope of a rich boy meeting a poor girl, he is her colonizer, but somehow their love works out in the end. We learn that Alisha's dream is to go to France to dance in Paris and be able to wear dresses that the aristocracy wears in Versailles.

²⁸⁰ Ibid, 14.20.

²⁸¹ Ibid, 15.45.

²⁸² Robertson, 76.

²⁸³ "【宝塚歌劇】 2015年 花組『カリスタの海に抱かれて』／『宝塚幻想曲』.

²⁸⁴ Trans. "This is Love".

²⁸⁵ Robertson, 77.

Charles brings Alisha a dress back from Paris after reporting to the main government about Calista. Even though Charles and Alisha are lovers, in this scene, Charles treats Alisha like a child; he is the father who will bring gifts for his daughter after he returns from a business trip. As Alisha, is changing behind a bush, Charles imagines her in the dress and starts to sing aloud his thoughts of Alisha. To Charles, Alisha is a *himawari no you na musume*, or a child/daughter whom is as pretty and bright as a sunflower²⁸⁶. Further adding to the dynamic where *musume-yaku* lower themselves down to raise the performed masculinity of *otoko-yaku*. At one point the two are walking towards each other and when they get close enough to touch, Alisha spins around Charles. In this first version, since they do not dance, they merely just circle around each other Alisha seems even more childlike while raising the status of Charles as ‘man’²⁸⁷. During the climax of the song, Charles looks towards the audience knowingly, that Alisha, a simple girl, who just wants to waltz and have dresses, is his true love. In the reprise of “Kore ga Koi” Alisha physically follows Charles around the stage to the final pose, both physically and in voice. After Charles sings *moshikashite*, and *kore ga koi*, Alisha repeats those words while singing the melody, and in the last line of the song when their voices come together, Charles is waiting for Alisha to join in.

In its reproduction of masculinity and femininity, Takarazuka imposes ideologies of what it means to be ‘man’ and ‘woman’ onto female bodies, burdening them with the responsibility to carry on and convey those meanings to larger audiences. *Musume-yaku* are reserved and keep their arms close to their sides, their voices are high and their actions childlike. *Otoko-yaku* are loud, tough, take up space, and are allowed to treat women like children. *Musume-yaku* are

²⁸⁶ *Musume* in Japanese can be translated as daughter, but can also be viewed as a pet word for a lover.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

hyper-feminized so that their *otoko-yaku* counterparts can play within androgyny and in some sense even reproduce masculinity. Off-stage when *otoko-yaku* are using method acting and continuing to play their role in everyday society, not only prioritize masculinity, but perform masculinity in such an idealized way that it is usually unattainable for most people. Because of the “good wife, wise mother” ideology that the Revue was founded on, the fact that *otoko-yaku* can carry and act out ‘male’ is good for the future because they can train their sons to understand what proper masculinity is, just as they can teach their daughters about femininity. Like Abbitt explains, even though *otoko-yaku* uphold stringent gender roles and assignments, they also explore androgyny and “the range of actions possible in the world, unrestricted by the limitations of gender assignment”²⁸⁸. Through their method acting and how they reproduce masculinity, the *otoko-yaku* are disrupting time, and bringing into question the authenticity of assigned attribute to certain genders.

After *otoko-yaku* are finished performing on the Revue stage, they are expected to continue to act and dress as men in Japan²⁸⁹. *Onabe* who also dress and act as men in Japan do the exact same performance yet why, are *otoko-yaku* idolized for their performances and *onabe* pushed to the side? For starters, *otoko-yaku*’s performance or masculinity is to be enjoyed as female, not as ‘male’²⁹⁰. Also “*Otoko-yaku* have been characterized as sexless; the argument being that ambiguous gender is perceived as an asexual identity”²⁹¹. Even though on stage *otoko-yaku*, as ‘man’ may be the object of desire, but the *otoko-yaku* herself is portrayed as someone who is not sexual²⁹². Others may desire and idolize those who play *otoko-yaku* but

²⁸⁸ Abbitt, 254.

²⁸⁹ Robertson, 54.

²⁹⁰ Abbitt, 252.

²⁹¹ Robertson, 81.

²⁹² Ibid.

because the actresses are not allowed to be married, or have men other than their fathers, in the dorm the actresses become desexualized²⁹³. Whereas *onabe*, as seen from *onabe* such as Gaish, are sexual beings. They work to entertain women and outside of work have sex or even relationships with them. *Onabe* and *otoko-yaku* do the exact same gendered performance. However, one's performance is perceived sexually and as a downfall to society, while the other is given an 'asexual' identity and assumed to be heterosexual. Even though *otoko-yaku* stay in role they are not seen as ideal man, nor as someone young men should look up to, their performance is one that exist solely for the sake of entertainment, whereas *onabe* strive to be, act, and pass as real men²⁹⁴. While the *otoko-yaku* do perform a sort of androgynous gender slippage, they uphold strict gender norms. They are not seen as a threat to society since after their performance of 'male' is done in the Revue they go on to have regular jobs, get married, and have children²⁹⁵. Compared with *onabe*, who challenge what is 'male,' 'female' and our concept of gender, and who are people that embody and perform what attributes they so desire are threatening to the cis-heteronormative society, which is a society that privileges the people who are cisgender and heterosexual²⁹⁶, of Japan²⁹⁷. They are sexual beings so they can challenge Japanese standards of gender. While *otoko-yaku* disrupt the normalized pattern of what women are supposed to do and queer gender through androgyny, *otoko-yaku* continue to uphold strict gender and sexual norms in Japan. Once both performances of 'male' gender on female bodies is accepted within the mainstream, there will not be tolerance of deviant individuals like *onabe*.

²⁹³ Ibid, 80.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, 26.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ "Definition of Terms".

²⁹⁷ Sugiura, 136.

Chapter 5: Queering and Questioning Gender

Through my project I have attempted to demonstrate how masculinity on traditionally non-masculine bodies is viewed. Through first-hand accounts, literature, documentary, and theater we have learned how lesbian women, *onabe*, and Takarazuka's *otoko-yaku* play with and perform masculinity. We have also learned how these individuals have dealt with their non-normative gender expression, and how they have coped with other people inscribing gender norms onto their bodies. As described in Chapter 1, lots of the research done today on non cis-heteronormative cultures in Japan have been done. Academic and literary works done about queer masculinity, the performance of masculinity by non-masculine bodies, explore groups like masculine women, *onabe*, and the performance of *otoko-yaku* separately. However works the connecting various discourses and building a cohesive agenda among different queer groups in Japan are few²⁹⁸. But in order to understand why this is so we had to explore the histories of which contemporary Japanese queer culture and Japanese modern theater was created in.

In Chapter 2, to fully understand where masculine lesbian women, *onabe* and *otoko-yaku* fit into current and past discourses, we need to understand Japan's past view on women, sexuality and gender. I will be discussed Japan's queer history from the Heian Era (794 - 1185) to as recent as 2002 when the Japanese Diet passed a law that allowed trans individuals to change their sex legally. We also discovered that in women influenced the creation of *Nō* by teaching Zeami and Kan'nami dances that are now central to *Nō*²⁹⁹. In the Edo period performances started by an all-female cast called Kabuki started³⁰⁰. However, women were banned from the stage because of the disapproval of the Shogunate, so young boys called

²⁹⁸ McLelland, 155.

²⁹⁹ Kokubu, 27.

³⁰⁰ Ibid, 59.

wakashu took their place³⁰¹. *Wakashu* were also banned from performing on the *Nō* stage, so men started perform as women³⁰². At the same time, Western ideals and mores started to be adopted into Japanese society, and sex practices that were for pleasure were no longer acceptable³⁰³. Japanese society, which was once open to queerness, non-heterosexual sexualities, and gender fluidity became closed to these topics. Despite this gay, and lesbian groups started to meet and form³⁰⁴. While these queer communities were starting to form, theater started to change and mimic subjects and performance from the West³⁰⁵. These new forms of performances included the all-female Takarazuka Revue³⁰⁶. By exploring both Japan's queer, and theatrical histories we understand why gender performance, expression, and identity in Japan is still important today.

For Chapter 3 I discussed masculine characters in Japanese lesbian literature, and *onabe*. The first short story "Sparkling Rain" recounts the days when an old lesbian couple first met³⁰⁷. In this first story, we learned that there was an acceptable amount of masculinity a Japanese woman can perform and express³⁰⁸. The second story "Monalisa Night" masculinity on Japanese women is presented as unattractive, and a turn-off for one of the main characters³⁰⁹. In "Junko's After School Project" masculinity performed and worn by women is dangerous and abnormal³¹⁰. Because *onabe* can be defined as lesbian women who dress and act like men, and their performance of masculinity corresponds to their sexuality I included *onabe* in the second chapter. However, unlike masculine presenting lesbian women their gender expression and

³⁰¹ "When Japan Had a Third Gender".

³⁰² Kokubu, 28.

³⁰³ McLelland, 142.

³⁰⁴ Ibid, 152.

³⁰⁵ Kokubu, 97.

³⁰⁶ Robertson, 27.

³⁰⁷ "Sparkling Rain," 181.

³⁰⁸ Ibid, 187.

³⁰⁹ "Monalisa Night," 59.

³¹⁰ Suzuki, 588.

performance has a lot to do with their identity³¹¹. As Gaish said it is not that they wish to be a man, they just do not identify fully with woman³¹². Lastly, with Kazu and Tatsu we see how important it is for people to accept *onabe* for who they are³¹³. *Onabe* and masculine lesbian women are part of a history of exploring gender.

Like *onabe* and masculine Japanese women, *otoko-yaku* in the Takarazuka Revue also perform gender, however, their performance is not because of their sexuality or gender identity, but it shows how gender continues to be fluid in modern theater. In analyzing scenes from *Embraced by the Seas of Calista* we understand how the *otoko-yaku* performs gender, while subverting social gender norms. The gestures, dress, and speech that they learn to pass as a man in Japanese society make their performance in the Revue fluid³¹⁴. Their performance in not enjoy as the audience viewing men acting, it is because the audience knows that these are women freely performing masculinity that makes their performance enjoyable³¹⁵. Finally it is because they go back to being a woman when their career in Takarazuka is finished, *otoko-yaku* are not seen as a threat to Japanese society³¹⁶.

Masculinity on women's bodies can be seen multiple ways. Takarazuka performs gender fluidity in the most acceptable way, on a stage. Other women like *onabe* and lesbians perform masculinity too, yet is not fully accepted. These women choose to take the step to separate from cis-heterosexual society because they need to deal with their sexuality and gender expression. Most of the women who wrote for *Queer Japan* have been dressing masculinely since they were

³¹¹ Sugiura, 129.

³¹² *Shinjuku Boys*.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Robertson, 32.

³¹⁵ Abbitt, 252.

³¹⁶ Robertson, 26.

younger; it is a choice they made while growing up.³¹⁷ Some felt that if they could dress and be more like men they could be better people, and a better choice for the women that they wanted to love³¹⁸. The process of being alright with expressing their gender more masculine as a lesbian is one that takes a lifetime. It is not a matter of whether or not people like their families accept them, it's whether they're lovers accept them, and for some reason that seems like the key for them 'accepting' themselves.

In literature, masculinity seems to be a flaw on Japanese women. In "Sparkling Rain" Itsuko presentation is neither masculine nor feminine, but something in-between³¹⁹. In "Monalisa Night," masculinity on Hana who is Japanese-American, is too much, too overwhelming, and therefore not attractive³²⁰. For *onabe*, too, it is difficult for them to present masculinely. In *Shinjuku Boys* we learn that for three *onabe* that they have always performed masculinity. Gaish has always thought they were detestable as a woman, but never wanted to be seen as a man³²¹. Kazu, too, felt that it was unnatural for them to be a woman, and felt their world collapse when they got their first period³²². Tatsu, is on hormones and identifies as 'he' and seems to have come to terms with their identity as both an *onabe* and trans man³²³. Part of Onabe identity overlaps lesbian who are masculine of center; feelings of acceptance, and wanting to be accepted are mutual among both groups. However *onabe* is separate from masculine lesbian women because it part their identity also overlaps with trans identity. Whether that is identifying as a trans man,

³¹⁷ *Queer Japan*, 30.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ "Sparkling Rain," 188.

³²⁰ "Monalisa Night," 59.

³²¹ *Shinjuku Boys*.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid.

or gender nonconforming, or simply as *onabe*. Their discourse comes from the entertainment industry where performative masculinity, or femininity by *wakashu*, was accepted³²⁴.

Takarazuka's *otoko-yaku* perform masculinity everyday on and off the Revue stage. However, unlike *onabe*'s performace of masculinity, *otoko-yaku*'s performance is. Unlike either masculine lesbian woman or *onabe* they are viewed more or less as heterosexual³²⁵. Their discourse overlaps with *onabe* because they also entertain people everyday. They are important because as a form of accepted performance of masculinity they can be a voice, advocate, and add to the discourse of the queer identities. However, because of the industry they work for and that their performers present heterosexually, returning to normal culture when their career ends. Takarazuka performers probably will not advocate for queer communities for a while. I believe that until there is a united front in the queer community about what everyone wants in terms of rights and freedom to express themselves, masculinity on women or bodies that have been labeled non-masculine will not be fully accepted, either by the people performing masculinity or observing it. By having female performers on stage performing masculinity, slowly but surely Japan is going back to it's roots of being a fluid country. Once Japan goes back to those roots, and people learn that being lesbian, masculine presenting, or non-normative can Japan fully move on to creating an environment that can accept many people for who they are.

³²⁴ "When Japan Had a Third Gender".

³²⁵ Robertson, 27.

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私はおかしなのだろうか？

彼女を恋人にしたいなんて……。

揺れ動く十代の心理の軌跡を

当時の日記に追う美少女！

【高校生の日記】

初恋の日々

大石実 (編集者)

写真 奥玉磨子



私の初恋は高校一年の春。相手は、安田陽子というクラスメイトだった。

同性への恋は、憧れから始まることが多いという。私の場合も同じである。

私の通った高校は地方の進学校だった。当時は、能力別クラス編成が実施されており、私達のクラスには、入学時の成績上位者五十人が集まった。クラスは男子四十人に対して女子が十人。地方とはいえ、一応いすれも近隣の中学校の精鋭の集まりだった。

学級開きの最初のホームルームで、彼女は担任から女子の学級委員に指名された。それは彼女の成績が女子の一番だったことを意味した。目は切れ長のおちよぽ口、どちらかと言えば古典的な美人タイプだった。栗色のサラサラした髪が制服の真っ白なカラーにかかり、きめの細かい色白の肌が、みずみずしかった。自己紹介で彼女は、自分はスポーツが大好きだと言った。得意科目は数学で、将来は理数系に進みたいと話した。初対面の級友の前で少しもものおじせず、明るい口調でハキハキと語る彼女には、これまでの小・中学校の友達にはない、新鮮な魅力があった。私は一目で彼女が好

きになった。

私は高校からバスで一時間ほど離れた小さな町に生まれた。家は兼業農家で、父は会社に通い、農業の方は母と祖母とで切り盛りしていた。きょうたいは六人も多く、私はその末子である。小さい頃は身体が弱かったせいもあり、とても大事に育てられた。姉や兄達には厳しかった父も私には一度も手をふり上げたことがなく、母といえはもう溺愛に近いかわいがりようだった。さて、そんな私の世界に登場した陽子は、まるで別の国からやって来た女王様のようなであった。その当時（一九六七）八生の日記を読み返すと、もう情けないほどの動揺がわく。

彼女を前にすると
何も言えなくなってしまう

六月六日

今日は高校へ入って初めての記録会だった。私は一、〇〇〇mリレーの第三走者で走っただけだったので、走ったあとはいたってのんびりと陽子さん達といっしょに話をしながら、他の人達が走るのを応援していた。

なぜ私は陽子さんと母等に話ができな
いのだろうか？ いつも、何か圧迫を感じ
ているような気がする。今日なんか、自
分でもよくわからないのだけれど、彼女の
前に立つとあがつてしまふよきになつてし
まい、トンチンカンなことばかり言ってい
る。彼女の横顔を見て「美しい」と思っ
たり、いつもみんなと話す時はおもしろいこ
とが口からすらすら出てくるのに、彼女の
前だと冗談ひとつ出でこなし。本当に私ど
うかしている。何かコンプレックスめいた
ものを感じているのだろうか？ どうして
なのだろうか？ もっと素直に話したい。
高校でもひとり親友を見つけたのだが、
この気持ちを彼女にぶつけてみたい。

「あなたと親友になりたい」この一言が口
に出せない私は、その気持ちを切々と訴え
た手紙を書き、思い切つて彼女に手渡した。
翌日届いた彼女からの返事は、二人だけの
壁を作らず、多くの人も仲良くなりた。
その上での親友というのならなつてはし
いというものであった。正直なところ、「あ
なただけの親友になります」という返事を
期待していた私は、彼女のこのバランス感

意に少しがっかりした。それにしてもこれは「第一門門、通事」の合図に違いはなく、ウキウキと心を弾ませるのだった。

ところが、ちやうどその頃、『高・コーエ』という雑誌の相談コーナーを読んで、私のこの感情は、異性との恋愛に類した擬似恋愛体験で、異時期特有のものだという知識を得る。まだ、それが大人になっても続く同性愛となり、フロイトが「同性愛は精神の異常」と定義していることも、図書館の古ぼけた心理学の本で知った。友情にしては強すぎる自分の感情に、なんとか説明をつけた一心で、本をさがあさつたのだが、当時の心理学関係の本は私の罪悪感をあおりたてただけだった。

七月二十九日

顔から何か狼狽めいた注があふれてくる。私は一体何を考えているのだろうか？

今日私は陽子さんといつしよに映画館を見に行ってきた。映画館の中で私は隣り合わせのあの人の腕が触れるたびに、動揺を覚えた。膚と膚が触れ合うたびに、胸の奥底で何か熱いものが燃えるような気がするのだ。こんなことはいけなしたことなのだろう。

か？ 全く私はどうかしている。前、何かの本を読んだ時、女の子の友情には無意識の内に相手を同性の恋人としていっていることが多いと書いてあった。全く私は何を考えているのだろうか？

中野さん達にもう顔を合わせることができないような気がする。

私はいやらしい女？

こんなふうに私の中に湧き起こる感情は、友情よりも同性愛に近いのではないかと、う疑いが、だんだんふくれ上がっている。その疑いが確信に変わったのが、その夏の富士登山での一夜だった。

八月十一日

八、九日と、学校の登山教室に陽子さんと参加した。ひどく疲れた。

彼女は全く規律正しい人だ。時間通りに行動する。先生の言うことをよく守る。少しもはめをはずさない。消灯時間になれば、すぐ眠ってしまう。他の人が騒げば、やかましと怒る。私ははかだかた。自分は少しも眠たくないのに、彼女に調子を合わせ

▲富士登山教室の時の写真(著作権無効)



るために「静かにしてくださーい」なんて言っただけ。全くはかだかた。

それでも私はやはり感じていた。山小屋のせまいふとんの中で、私は her hand と my hand が、つながればいいと思い、偶然にその時が来ることを願った。無駄だった。ああ私はどうしてこうなのだろう！ 不潔だとも思う。夜、のどがかわいた。私は彼女の lip を put した bottle に my lip を put

した。そして drank。私は間接接吻をしたのだ。後で考えてみれば、たまたま自分のいやらしい性を後悔した。やはりこれはさ、言うしかならないのだろうか？ こんな私には彼女に友情を望む資格などないのだろうか？

この夏の富士登山を境に、彼女の私への態度は一変する。思いつめた表情で悶々としている私に、さすがの彼女も愛想をつかしたのだろうか。一学期に入って私は、自分の手に負えない感情の中にひとり取り残された。

九月二十一日

なぜあの人は私をさるようになったのか？ なんだと私にはわからない。あの人は、私の気持ちに気づいていたのだろうか？ それにしても、無言で去って行く彼女を私はただ何もして見送っている。あの人の顔に怒ったって泣いたって、それとどうなるといって彼女ではないと私は知ってしまった。もう一度と一学期のうちにあの人と話することはないだろう。あの人が教室で中野さんとも楽しそうに

笑う声……あの甘えるしぐさ……ああ、気が狂いそうだ。それなのにあの人は残酷だ。廊下で二人きりで会ったとき、お義理で話をかけようとする。ひどい。

一体あの人を自分の何にしたいのか？ 友達？ 本当か？

「あがめるものは、さわるものではない。金貨がはがれて手につく」

先日読んだ『ボヴァリー夫人』の中にあつた言葉。彼女に近づぐべきではなかったのか？ 私はどうするべきなの？ 陽子さんをあきらめるべきなの？ もう本当に不可能なの？ 誰か教えてほしい。

十一月九日

明後日は数学のテスト。その次は、代々木ゼミのテストとテストテスト。

あの人は今日、図書館で私の真ん前の席にすわって、私に英語の補習のテキストの解答を教えてくれと言ってきた。私は、心の中がブルブル震えて、幸福感に満たされた。私はすごく上機嫌で教えてやった。なんだ、以前の二人にもとつたのではないかと錯覚を起したほどだった。後になつて考えたら、錯覚、利用されただけなのて

はないかと思つた。しかし、私には、それがたまた利用であつてもよかった。あのひと一言でも言葉をかわすだけで私の心の中は満たされるのだ。

学校へ行つて、毎日せめて一言でもいから気軽に彼女と話ができたかな。

ふりまわされて

甘やかされて育つたために、やや神経質などところがあるものの、親しい者の間では、元来、明るいお調子者の私も、この時期にはずいぶん内向的になつた。徹底した無関心を装う彼女の振舞いは、私の骨身にこたえたのである。

現実が苛酷なときは、人は架空の世界を求め。当時の私は、よく小説を読んだ。

愛読書は、シャロット・ブロンテの『嵐が丘』と谷崎潤一郎の『春琴抄』だった。『嵐が丘』では、亡霊になつてまで悪人のキヤサリンを求め続けるヒースクリフに自分の心境を託し、『春琴抄』では、春琴と同じ盲目の世界に生きようとして、自らの目を針で潰す佐助になりきるのだった。なんというマゾヒストぶりだろう！

それにしても、小説にして、映画にして、描かれるのは男と女の恋愛ばかり。当時、上映された『風と共に去りぬ』を観に行つた時、スクリーンに大映しになるレッド・バトラー(クラーク・ゲイブル)とスカリーン・オブ・オハラ(ビビ・リンリー)のキス・シーンで、私は自分が、のけるスカリーン・オブ・バトラーの方に完全に感情移入をしていて、息をのんで見つめていた。もちろん、スカリーンは陽子だった。いつの日か私が彼女にキスをする時も、あんなふうにするのかな。それは、照れくさいような、それでいて重々としたような不思議な気分だった。あの時私は、異性愛の典型を刷り込まれたのだろう。私の目に入ってくるのは、いつでも『愛するのは男』『愛されるのは女』であつた。陽子と愛する私は、無意識の内に、愛する側つまり男の側に自分を置くことしたのだと思う。しかし、人は「男と女のよこし」だけ愛し合うものなのか。「女と女が愛し合う」とは、どういうことなのかという疑問は、それから私にとって、いつも解がなければならぬ命題となつた。そして、このことを考へ

▼『風と共に去りぬ』



る時、決まつてあの時の映像が鮮明にのみがえるのだ。陽子を前にすると、どことなく少年のように振舞い始めたのも、この頃からだつたような気がする。

十二月二十八日

あの人の心の奥底にひそんでいるものは一体何なのだろうか。今日私はあの人と図書館で二人きりで話

をした。話の中心と言ふは滝沢君のことだつた。あの人が男の人のことと悩む? Can it be true? あの人の心の中に私の影などこれっぽちもないだと思つた。あの人は自尊心が強い。「滝沢君は、勉強する上に女子は不向きだつて言うの。だから私、女子というのは私個人のことで、それとも全女性のことで?」って聞いてやつた。そして、全女性のことでよつて言つたから、それで安心したつて言つてやつた」と言うのだ。あの人の手際のみにとまらないう。一言だつて、この話の他は触れようとしないう。だから私はもう何も言わないう。いるつもりである。

十二月十五日

何だか自分の考へていることが、ばかしくなつてしまつた。私は一体どうして、うも彼女を追いかけなくてはならないんだらう? 頭はいいし、スポーツは得意だし、細み物は上手だし、顔はきれいだし、手はかわいいし……欠けたところなんて一つもないのだ。それにひきかえ私ときたい、運動はもちろん、数学なんて目もあてられない。手は男の手みたいにゴツゴツしてるし、

他人には妥協するし、オーバーで……なんだが本心にはがらしくなつてしまつた。彼女への愛だのなんのと言ひながら、結局は彼女への憧れとコンプレックスを感じてゐるだけのことなのだろうか。それとも私は、中野さんの言うように、ただ単にあの人の「色っぽさ」にだけ、ふりまわされていたのだろうか?

も考へるのはやめよう。

好きでもない彼と ファースト・キス

十二月十九日

私は人を愛する……特に異性を愛するといふ機能に欠けているのではないだろうか? 私は中野さんの性格がうらやましい。彼女のあ家庭的な暖かさ、親しみやすさが私にはない。彼女のそばに居ると、なんとなく安心してゐられるような気がするのだ。

それにしても私はどうかしているんだろうか? 誰しも好きな人がいるというのに、私にはそんな人はいない。その気になりさえすれば、悪口になれそうな男の手もいなくてはならない。しかし、どうしてもそ

んな気になれないのだ。私は将来、幸せになれるだろうか? 人を明るく愛することのできない自分の性格が情けない。この自分の性格のせいで、とんとんみんなからはずれていくような気がしてならない。

「私の好きな人はあなたなのよ」と心の中で叫ぶ私の耳に、誰かが「愛は男と女のもの。女と女の愛なんてありえない」とささやく。その声に耳を貸さぬため、私は時々、男の子の方を振り向くのだつた。

中学校時代、私には二年上の靖君というボーイ・フレンドがいた。彼が中学を卒業して、他市にあった全寮制の学校に入学すると、休みのたびに家に帰る彼といつしよに近くの公園を散歩したり、彼の運転する車で遊園地までドライブしたりと、当時は結構な結構な中学生だつた。ところが、高校生になつて、この通りすつかり陽子の方に熱を上げて、靖君とつき合うのが面倒で生方がなくなつた。学校の方もそろそろ受験勉強に取り組みなければ、と思ひ始めたこともあつて、高校二年生の春、私の方から「もうこれで終わりにしよう」と別れ話を打ち出したのだが、なんと

その晩、私は好きでもない彼とファースト・キスをしてしまつたのである!

五月二日

もう忘れかけたあの感觸を、時々思い出さうとすることを、私は胸に秘してあててゐることがある。あの人の舌が私の口の中に入つてきたあの感觸。鏡の中の自分の唇が薄暗い光の中で異様に真っ赤に見えて狼狽した。

五感には人の心を陶酔させる力がある。こんなことになつた以前には、一度だつて靖君のことなんか恋しく思つたことはないうような気がする。中学の時、熱烈に戀えたこともあつたが、あの時とは全然違ふ。求める恋でなく、求められる恋なのだ。たつたひとつの行動がこれなんにも強く自分の心にひびくとは思ひなかつた。甘いような、もの悲しいような、抱きしめて抱きしめられていたような……苦しいのだ。時々、自分の唇を自分で愛撫してゐるのに気がついて、バツとしてしまつたことがある。

生まれて初めてのキスに酔ひしれた私は、キスのためだけに彼の別れを延期しよう

知るほど、私は彼女を、友達というより恋人として求めつづけてきたことを、認めるを得なくなっていくのだった。そして、やがてそういう自分を受け入れるのである。



彼女を恋人にしたい！

九月二十八日

久しぶりの澄みきった青空。秋が来たのだ。

学校から帰って床屋に行つた。待ち時間、同性愛の描写が露骨に書かれた、べんな小説を読んでた。キスしたり、抱きしめたり、乳房に手て触れたり、ひどいのだ。何かが異常な感覚で、心の中がカーッと熱くなった。自分が非常に悪いことをしているような気がした。お昼の時、前の席に座っていたあの人が、私のカバンに頭をのせたり、昨日の体育の時間、リンスを使つた髪の毛の匂いを私にかがせようとして、私に髪を向けてきた時……私の胸はうずくんだ。衝動的に突然的に自分が気が狂つて、彼女を抱きしめてしまうようにさえ思ひ、反面、そうした自分にもう一人の自分は気付いていて、さんざん告ぐのだった。安らぎは求められな

い人とわかっているのに。

十一月二十五日

自分があの人とはおをびつたり寄せ合つて、そうしていること自体がものすごく辛くて、心の奥底からコンコンとして湧き上がってくる幸せ・幸せ。おかしい夢だった。自分の欲求不満を明らかに示すものであつた。

異常を異常として認め、正常として自分の心を受け入れていること自体、異常なのかもしれないが、自分としてはこうでもしなくては苦しくて耐えられないだろう。自分が同性愛的傾向のある人間だということ——去年一年間これを認めることだけに苦しんだのに、今ではそれをもう自分の性格の一部としてしまっている。

陽子は跳ねて私を困らせるのを楽しんでるかのようだった。私の心の振子は右に左に大きく揺れ、その振幅のあまりの激しさに、プツンと糸が切れるのは時間の問題だった。高校三年の冬休み、私は友達と初めて彼女の家を訪れた。彼女はこじんまりした平屋に家族五人で住んでいた。お父

さん毎年願書書いて、散らかってるから上がれなくてごめんね」そう言う彼女には、教室で見せる自信に満ちた表情はなかった。そこに立っていたのは、自分のテリトリに不意に突入してきた私と友達に、恥じらうさを見せる、いたいけな一人の少女であつた。私の胸は、彼女に対する愛くもしくさとおしきていっばいになった。「この人が好きなんだ」私は、もうこの気持ちを隠そうとはしなかった。



私は求めた、そして彼女も

一月二日

夢に見たこと……あの人と私が二人はおをびつたり寄せ合つて、そうしていること、だけでもものすごく辛くて、心の底からコンコンと暖かなものが湧き上がってくる。あの人の目が妙に熱をおびたかのように潤んで、いつか私はあの人を自分の胸にしつかりと抱きしめていた。わけもなく悲しくて、心臓が高鳴り、甘苦しい幸福感に浸つて……。

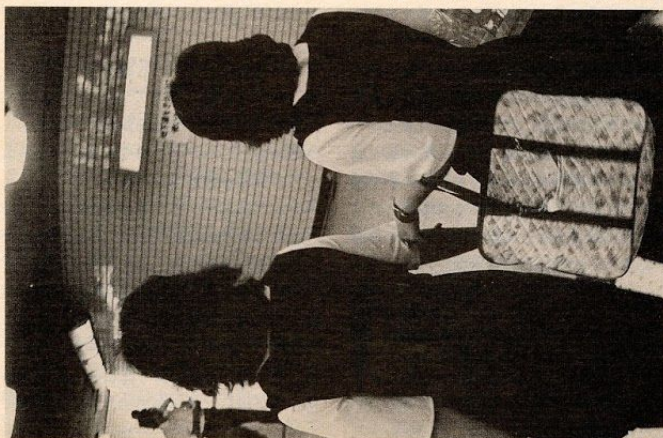
昨夜の夢ことは自分にとって、夢の延長のような気がした。あの始まりの時、私

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ばかりでなく、彼女も求めていたことは確かである。私は求めた、あからさまに。彼女だけでよかった。抱きしめて、そのまま死んでもいいと思ひだ。

しかし、どうして初めは拒んだのだろう。三回くらい彼女は泣き出しそうな声で「いや」と言っていた。それでもあきらめずに私が自分の唇を彼女の唇に重ねると、彼女が小さなうがいやをす

る時のように、顔を振つていた。彼女の唇は小さかった。ふつと見る時でも、さくら貝のようにかわいいなと思つていた。だから自分の唇で彼女のそれをおおつてしまうことさえできた。彼女は彼女の舌をためらいがちに私の中へ入れてきた。やわらかだった。激しくそれを繰り返すと、彼女もずいぶん興奮して私をキエツと抱きしめたりした。私の髪の毛をささく撫でながら



「ばか」と小さな声でささやくのだった。ああ、なんてかわいひとなのだろう！ 私は離れなくなくて、離れなくなくて、彼女の胸を自分の胸に引きつけて、いつまでもそうしている他なかった。

一月三日

あの日、彼女を乗せたバスのドアの閉まる音があまりにも冷たくて。あの日、彼女が言い残した「さよなら」が、バスの排気ガスの中をバイクに乗って走る私の頭の中でリンリン鳴っていた。

自分は見返りを期待することなしに、自分ひとりて力いっぱい彼女を愛し続けることができたと思つてた。自分も愛していれば、その人の愛も返すことだと思つてた。そうして愛そのものを愛に甘んじている自分を認めていたのだ。それが、彼女のいつもと変わらない「さよなら」を聞いた時、心は動揺した。急に空しさが襲つてきた。自己も世の中も、生きること、愛することも……。部屋に戻るなりカーテンを閉めて、狂ったように赤玉ポトフワインをガブ飲みした。十分もたたぬうちに、あのひんを一本空けてしまった。あのこ

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とはあまりよく覚えていない。とにかく、七時頃が最高に気分悪くて、やんの上やあちこつに吐いたらしい。苦しかったことだけ覚えてる。

枕元で母がさかんに何か言っている。私は「母さん、お母さん」とわめいてたよ。そして、それを聞いてもらえなかった。自分で電話まで歩いて行った。ガラガラガシャン……と電話の落ちてガラスにあたる音……彼女のお母さんにわけのわからぬあいさつをして……彼女の声……ああ……彼女の声……何を言ったのか全然覚えていない。ただ、彼女がこまったような声で何か言っていたのだけ覚えてる。

意外と早く彼女は来てくれた。私は苦しくて吐きつづけるばかり。「本当によく来てくれた。来てくれないと思ってた」と、私は「こんなはかばかいう言つたんじゃないよ」と、あの人は言った。夜、酔い気分は悪かったけれど、心は幸福感に浸っていた。

あの人が泣いたと言った。私のこと……Oh! What a thing! あの人は誰にはまて出られないのだと言った。私はどう

でもよかった。生のままで、裸のままで、ひたひたにゴソゴソとしたもので、彼女に近づきたいのだ。

「男のように愛することはできない」

こうして、私の初恋は成就した。彼女に初めて会った時から、一年九カ月が経っていた。私達はやれ試験が近いから、やれ相談があるからとお互いの家に泊まり合い、甘い時を過ごした。裸になると、彼女は私より早熟で大胆だった。私はただひたすら彼女が快感を得るように愛撫の試行錯誤を繰り返した。あんなに遠かった彼女がすぐそばにいる！ しかも私の愛撫でエクスタシーを感じて！ 愛する者を悦ばせること——それは何ものにもかえがたい醍醐味である。私の頭の中にはいつも白いミルクが溢れた。

しかし、そんな関係も長続きはしなかった。最初こそ私はあのレント・ベトラーのようになりしく、包み込むように彼女を愛そうとした。だが、やがて、私は「男のよう」に「愛する」という役を演じきれない自分を感に始めた。そして、そういう内面の悩み

を、彼女と言葉でわかり合えないことがもたらしかつたのである。

高校三年の夏、二人の関係は彼女の母親が気づいたため、彼女は私との間に距離をおくようになった。大学に入ると、彼女はすぐに男の恋人を作り、大学卒業と同時に結婚した。彼女のことは私はなかなか忘れられなかったが、私自身の軌道修正のため、大学入学当初は男の友達とつき合ったりもした。しかし、男達をきれたとか、かわいいと感じられない以上、彼らが私の恋の相手でないことは明らかだった。

その後、私は数人の女達と出会い、様々な恋愛関係を結んだ。女達の中には、私に「男っぽさ」を求める人もいた。そんな時、私はさきで、こみ上げる吐き気を抑えながらわざと「女っぽく」振舞った。私は女を愛する女。男の代用品ではない。私が「女」のワラを飛び出したのは、「男」になりたかつたからではない。自分ののびのびとした心を「らしさ」で固定する世界が嫌だったからなのだ。だから、女の人を愛するために、私が「男」になる必要は少しもない。だれを愛そうと、だれに愛されよう、私は私なのだ。

High School Diary: Days of my First love

By: Makoto Oishi

I had my first love in the spring of my first year of high school. My partner, Yasuda Yoko, was my classmate. Love for the same sex often starts with longing. It was the same with me. My high school was a local preparatory school. In those days, class was organized by ability, and when my class entered high school 50 the best students gathered. The class had 40 boys in comparison with 10 girls. Nevertheless in the region this was an elite neighborhood middle school.

In the first home room of the year, she was nominated by the homeroom teacher to be the girl's class representative. This meant that she had the highest marks of the girls. She had small mouth and almond eyes, which ever you say, she had a rather classical type of beauty. Her silky maroon hair made her uniform look pure white, and she had light fair skin. In her self-introduction she said that she loved sports. The subject she prospered in was math, and she talked about how in the future she wanted to progress in math and science. In the first presentation in front of our classmates she was not scared and spoke in a clear, level tone, and this was very different from the elementary and middle school I went to, so she had a fresh charm about her. It was love at first sight.

I was born in a small town about an hour away from school. My house was a part-time farm; my father was employed at a company and the farm was managed by my mother and grandmother. I had six siblings of which I was the youngest. When I was young I had bad health so I was raised with care. My brothers and sisters were strict, my father was so strict but he would never beat me, and my mother showed affection that was close to doting.

Now, this is the story of how I came to be in the world, Yoko was like a queen coming from another country. When I reread my diary from high school (1967 – 68) I saw that I was in emotional turmoil.

I Couldn't Bring Myself to Say Anything When I Was in Front of Her.

June 6th

Today was my first high school track meet. Since I was the third runner in the 1000 meter relay, at my leisure I cheered on other people who ran and talked with Yoko.

Why couldn't I speak with her as an equal? I always have this feeling of pressure. Something else happened today, that I myself don't understand, as stood in front of Yoko, I was incoherent. As I saw her profile I thought to myself "she's beautiful," even every time she talks with someone interesting things come out smoothly, and people don't make jokes in front of her. What is the matter with me? What are these complex things that I feel? Why do I feel them? I want a more peaceful story. I want to have one close friend in high school but I want to vent these feelings to Yoko.

"I want to become close friends with you," these few words that can't leave my mouth, I passionately raise attention to them as I write this letter, and I boldly hand them over to her. The next day a reply was delivered from Yoko, for which she said "The two of us cannot put up a wall since I want to become friends with a lot of people. Keeping that in mind I want to become best friends". To be honest I expected a reply that stated "I want to only be friends with you" so I was a little disappointed with her balanced feelings. Even so was this not a sign of "passing through the first barrier?" My heart sprung excitedly.

Around this time I read a magazine from the consultation corner called *First Year Course* that told me that these feelings of mine, were false love experiences that are characteristic of puberty would prep me for true love with the opposite sex. In addition, in an old book about psychology that was in the library said if the false love continues into adulthood it becomes homosexuality, which Freud defines as “the abnormality of the spirit.” the books that I perused made me feel guiltier about my strong feelings for my best friend even though I was searching for answers.

July 29th

I sweat so much because of the confusion in my head. What the heck am I thinking?

Today Yoko and I went to see a movie together. Every time in the movie theater that I linked arms with her, I remember being upset. Every time our skin came in contact, I felt something burning deep within my chest. I wonder what this feeling is? Something must be wrong with me. In the book from before, it was written that in the context of women our friendship is unconsciously like that of a same-sex lover. I wonder what am I thinking?

I noticed that I could not bring myself to look Nagano in the face.

Am I a Bad Women?

The doubt that welled inside me made me feel that we were closer to same-sex lovers than friends. This suspicion changed to conviction when we spent an overnight class together that summer on Fuji.

August 11th

On the 8th and 9th day of the month, I participated with Yoko in a mountain hiking class. It was really exhausting.

Yoko is very disciplined. Everything was done on schedule. And she always preserved what the teacher said. She never misbehaved. Yoko quickly fell asleep after lights out. If other people made noise, I got mad. I was an idiot. Even though I didn't want to sleep yet, in order to match her mood I would say "be quiet." I am really an idiot.

Yet, still I was feeling again. On the small futons, I thought it would be ok if *her hand*¹ touched *my hand*, at that time I hoped for that chance. It was useless. Why am I like this?! I thought it was filthy. I became thirsty at night. I *put my lip* on the *bottle* where she *put her lip*, and *drank*. I indirectly *kissed* her. I regretted my own desires. I could only call this *S*? I wonder if right to desire friendship from her.

After that summer's mountain climbing class, her attitude towards me changed. To me it looked like she was worrying endlessly, as one would expect she too probably gave up on me. When we entered second semester I was left with these uncontrollable feelings.

September 21st

Why has she started to avoid me? I don't understand. Has she noticed my feelings? Nevertheless, without doing anything I watch her go by silently. I was angry and cried in front of her, she must not be the person I knew her to be. I probably am not able to talk to her like I did in the first semester. She seems to talk excitedly with Nagano, laughing ... clinging to her ... oh, it's

¹ The words written in *Italics* were in English in the original text.

driving me crazy. She is so cruel. Whenever I meet those two in the hallway, I speak in an obligatory voice. So cruel.

What the heck does that person want to be with me? Friend? Really?

“Don’t touch your idols: the gilding will stick to your fingers”

Those are words from a book I read the other day called Madame Bovary. Should I approach her? What should I do? Should I give up on Yoko? Is it impossible? I want to tell someone.

November 9th

The day after tomorrow I have a math test. Then next I have seminar tests after tests.

Today Yoko sat right in front of me in the library, and she ask that I teach her the answers of the supplementary English text. There was a tremble within my heart, and it was filled with happiness. I taught in a good mood. However, I couldn’t see anything outside of the two of us and it was enough to have caused an illusion. Later I thought, after all wasn’t I being used? However, I was glad to be used. Just by exchanging words with her fills my heart.

If only I could go to school and talk freely to her ... At the least I can say just one word.

To Be Swayed

Because one is raised and spoiled, one is a little nervous, within a new persona, originally, the extroverted person that I was became introverted during this time. Her behavior of pretending to be indifferent was the answer to my flesh and blood.

When reality gets harsh, people look to world of fiction. In those days I read novels often. My favorite book was Charlotte Bronte's Wuthering Heights and Tanizaki Jun'ichiro's A Portrait of Shunkin. Wuthering Heights is about Heathcliff whose committed feelings is continuously sought by the ghost of his lover Kathrine, and in A Portrait of Shunkin Sasuke, attempts to live in the same world of blindness as Shunkin, and puts a needle in his eye. What a masochist!

Even so, whether it's in a movie or a film, only the love between men and women is portrayed. When I went to go see the screening of Gone with the Wind, there was a close up of the kiss scene between Rhett Butler (Clark Gable) and Scarlett O'Hara (Vivian Leigh), and I completely remember the empathy I had towards Rhett Butler as he held Scarlett O'Hara as she bent backwards in this passionate kiss. Of course, Scarlett is Yoko. Someday, when I kiss Yoko like that, will it be like that? I was ashamed, yet there was this strange, stiff and heavy feeling too. At that time I thought I had a typical heterosexual love. It is always, at any time 'the man who loves passionately' and the 'woman who love passively'. I love Yoko, unconsciously I put myself in the role of the man. However, do people only have love 'like men and women'? From my perspective, the proposition for the question of how do 'women and women' love each other has become something that must be solved. The time that I was thinking this, I decided that it revives the image. Whenever I am in front of Yoko, I have a hunch that somehow I start acting like a boy.

November 28th

I wonder what the heck is in the depths of that person's heart.

Today I was alone with that person talking in the library. The center of our talk was about Takizawa-kun. Is she distressing about boys? *Can it be true?* I think that I am not a tiny reflection in this person's heart. They have a lot of self-respect. Yoko said that "Takizawa-kun said that it is unnecessary for women to stay on top of their studies. Is this personal since I am a woman? I asked is this about all women. In the end I was relieved." Yoko was in love with that person's admirable skill. These are a few words I will say about this story and I will not say anything about Takizawa-kun. I will not say anymore on the subject.

December 15th

Somehow I have thought that I have become foolish. Why the heck must I chase this girl? She is smart, is good at sports and knitting, is pretty, and has cute hands ... she's not lacking in anything. In comparison to me; I was disastrous at mathematics, and of course exercise. My hands looked lumpy like a boys, I give in to others, and I am overweight ... I am really foolish. Can I say I love her while I feel a longing complex? Or have I, as Nagano says, been swayed by her sexiness?

I should stop thinking about this.

My First Kiss Was With a Boy That I Didn't Even Like

December 19th

I love people ... I wonder why I lack the ability to love the opposite sex. I am envious of Nagano's personality. Her homely warmth and friendliness is nothing like me. Whenever I am next to her, somehow even I feel a peace of mind.

Even though that happens, something is the matter. Everyone has a person that they like but I have no such person. Even if I begin to like someone would they reciprocate those feelings? Surely, I can't have that. In the future will I be able to be happy? It is pathetic that my personality does not allow me to cheerfully love someone. Thanks to my personality more and more I cannot help but not want to go out with my friends.

My mind screams "the person that I like is you" but someone is whispering that "love is between men and women. Love between women is impossible." In order not to listen to the voice in my head, I give in, and sometimes I turn towards boys.

In middle school, my first boyfriend was Nobu who was two years ahead of me. He graduated middle school and he went to boarding school in another city; he was the boy that every vacation we would meet at a close by park and stroll through it together, we would take a drive to the coast in his car, I was a very precocious middle schooler. However, when I became a high schooler, my desire for Yoko made it troublesome to go out with Nobu yet I had no choice. Soon all the schools entrance exams would've been taken, in the spring of my second year of high school I began to think of "let's end this" break up conversation but, that night, I had my first kiss with a boy I didn't even like!

May 2nd

You have already forgotten that touch, but you are trying to remember it over and over again, I've directed your lips to my arm. That feeling as her tongue went inside my mouth. The lips in the mirror were unusually bright red in the dim light

The kiss has the power to intoxicate the mind. Before that I had kissed one person, Nobu, who I did not love. In middle school, that was passionately burning but this was totally different

from that. Rather than being the love that is sought out this is the love of being sought. I did not think that one act could resonate with my heart so strongly. Sweetly and sadly, I want to hug and be hugged So agonizing. Notice how my *lip* caresses, resulting in her being taken aback.

For the first time in my life I was drunk from a kiss, I considered postponing my farewell with him for only a kiss but in consideration of him that was really rude. After all, he and I got together after that. In the summer that year, to foster preparedness for our entrance examination, under the goal of physical exercise, we participated a school-sponsored training camp, and our whole class decided that we would spend seven days in the schools facilities in the mountains.

That Person is so Cute

August 24th

The time spent at the camp was very fun up until now. The first reason is that I was together in a room with Yoko.

For six days we were on the floor sleeping next to each other, and I had such dirty thoughts as to try and kiss her as she was sleeping many times. Even so, that person is too cute. Her eyes, nose, lips, hands, feet, chest, I love everything. I checked countless times to make sure she was asleep, Yoko's hand was on top of my futon, and I gently clasped them, and caressed my cheek.

Last night well all had a conversation going into detail about sex life after marriage. Yamashita is strong in mathematics and science, yet she thought drinking juice out of the same cup as men you can get pregnant - it was very funny. When someone asked: "When you sleep at

night, who do you want to hold closely?" Yoko said, "of course I think so. I want to be held by Takizawa-kun closely, and I want to kiss him" Who would know my surprise and shock at that time? We finished talking around 2:30. I was excited and did not sleep until around 4.

Nagano said I was frustrated. That being said, I blushed. I know the taste of a kiss. If it is with the person you love, it is probably even more satisfying.

August 25th

She too had many drawbacks. She is always trying to be a good person, and wants to be the center of attention, that sort of behavior is a little foolish. I understand that. I completely understand. Despite that I don't hold her in contempt, I can't. Nagano, Ikegami too, Yoko has the attributes they don't. She has the eyes that fascinate me, and she has such cute gestures. Same sex love? It is alright if you say it. I most likely do not idolize that person.

Nagano said if I say something about this I will have peace of mind. However, why can't I? Certainly, if I talk about this, by all means I will have peace of mind. But, simultaneously I have to be careful not to lose my most important thing, so I can't say anything about it. With Yoko, I sought not to become a friend within the true sense of friendship, and I cannot break myself away from this. Having said that, I don't want to be friends. If I think as a friend of that person's existence, she does not come into my mind at all. Yoko is not a person who seeks our friends.

The person called Nagano is sometimes in my diary, is a friend who is in my class. She is curious, is full of energy and vigor, has an observing eye, and seems to be aware of my repeated emotional ups and downs. She often reads books, and since she likes to we often talked about the main character's way of life and our evaluation of those people. On vacations we would stay

over one another's houses, and talk all night, and to me it was a friend I could meet and shared the world of words with. We decided on personal criticism and inevitably Yoko came up. Nagano vaguely knew my feelings, and made a very nasty evaluation of Yoko. On the bottom she felt jealousy towards Yoko. I saw for the first time through Nagano's eyes, took Yoko down from the seat of the queen that I longed for, and I calmly looked at her as just one of my classmates.

Certainly, I have been captivated by Yoko's physical appearance, and her distinctive mood, she is not the kind person who uses words to express herself. Whatever is said, Yoko is someone who approaches things as math problems, she is the type to think of the rational, and to say immature things in literature discussion. However, I can see that she is a different kind of person, the more I know her as a person with strong and weak points, and I had no choice but to admit that I was seeking her out as a lover rather than a friend

I Want to Love a Woman!

September 28th

The weather we haven't had in a long time. Finally fall came.

On the way from returning from school I went to a barber shop. While I was waiting I read a strange novel, which the depiction of homosexuality was written explicitly. They do things like kiss, hold, and touch nipples with their hands, it's excessive. What is this strange sensation, my heart becomes passionate and strong. I felt like doing something extremely bad. At lunchtime, that person who was sitting in front of my seat, put her head on my bag, and during yesterday's Physical Education class, in an attempt to get me to smell her hair, I sniffed the rinse

that she used to make her hair fragrant, and she directed her hair towards me ... my chest aches. Impulsively, suddenly, my mind goes mad, I think that I would finally hug her, however, I am aware of myself and my inner self, and I am utterly suffering. I understand that I am a person who cannot wish for peace of mind.

November 25th

I got close to Yoko's cheek, naturally I was so happy, I was so happy - it came bubbling up from deep inside my heart. It was a strange dream. It clearly illustrates my frustrations.

To acknowledge abnormalities as abnormalities, to accept one's one body's normalcies as normal, it might be abnormal, but as for myself I can't bear it, it's too painful. I am a human who has homosexual tendencies ---- last year, though admitting it is painful, now it is one part of my personality.

It was as if Yoko was enjoying pestering me with provocation. My hearts pendulum sways greatly from left to right, the amplitude was too intense, it would only be a matter of time until the thread snapped. The winter break of my second year of high school, I visited Yoko's home for the first time with my friends. She lives with her family of five in a small one story house. She said "My father wrote a new year's greeting, I'm sorry you can't come in," she did not have the facial expression of self-confidence that she has in the classroom. And I stood there, my friends and I who intruded on her territory unexpectedly, she even showed embarrassment, that was precious. My chest became filled with charming passion for her. "I love this person!" and I didn't try to hide these feelings.

I asked and She Did Too

January 2nd

In my dreams ... Yoko and I, we are closely touching cheeks, it's just that but I am really happy, and from within my heart I am yelling and warmth is bubbling out. The strange heat in that person's eyes is worn like moisture; someday I firmly embraced that person. Without reason, I am sad, my heart throbs violently, my sense of well-being is immersed in sweet pain

I feel that last night's event for me was an extension of my dreams. When it started, it wasn't just me, she certainly wished for it too. Without giving up, I directly asked. I'm glad it was only her. In our embrace, I thought it'd be ok to die just like that.

However, I wonder why I was initially refused? About three times in a whiny voice she said only "NO!" And without apologizing I put my *lip* on top of her *lips* while, she like a child whined, and waved her head. Her *lip* was small. Even when I saw normally, it thought she looked cute like a pink shellfish. So I put my *lip* on her so I could even cover hers. She put her tongue hesitantly inside of my mouth. It was soft. While repeating this vigorously, she too was very excited and embraced me tightly. While she stroked my hair softly in a small voice she whispered "Idiot". Ah, I wonder how she is so cute! To not want to be separated, and to not want to separate, to pull her to my chest - forever we did nothing but this:

January 3rd

That day, the sound of the doors of the bus carrying her are too cold. That day, her parting words "Goodbye," were ringing in my head as I rode my bike in the bus's exhaust.

Without expecting return, I thought I could continue to love her with my strength alone. Even if I loved her, I thought that such a person's love was second. Then I was comforted with being content in an unrequited love. When I hear her forever unchanging "goodbye" my heart

trembles. Suddenly I am overwhelmed with by my emptiness. For myself and the society I'm in, to live and to love ... as soon as I returned to my room I closed the curtains, and I went mad like a jasper gulping Akadama wine. In no time I chugged a whole bottle. And after that I do not remember anything very well. Anyway, I was in a terribly bad mood at around seven or so, I seemed to have vomited all over the place and on the futon. I only remember that it was painful.

My mother was frequently at my bedside saying something. I seem to have been screaming "Call Yoko". Since no one would listen to me I walked to the telephone. The phone crashed against the glass and sounded like breaking glass I greeted her mother in gibberish ... her voice ... ah ... her voice ... I don't remember anything that I was going to say. However, I remembered that she said something in a troubled voice.

Surprisingly early she came to me. I continued to vomit painfully. I said, "It's really good of you to come. I didn't think you would come". She said, "Only an idiot would say that". That night I still felt terrible but I was immersed in a feeling of happiness.

She said I cried ... *Oh! What a thing!* That person said that she was not about to leave me. I don't care. In raw, uncovered, messy, single-mindedness, I wanted to be close to her.

I Can't Love "Like a Man"

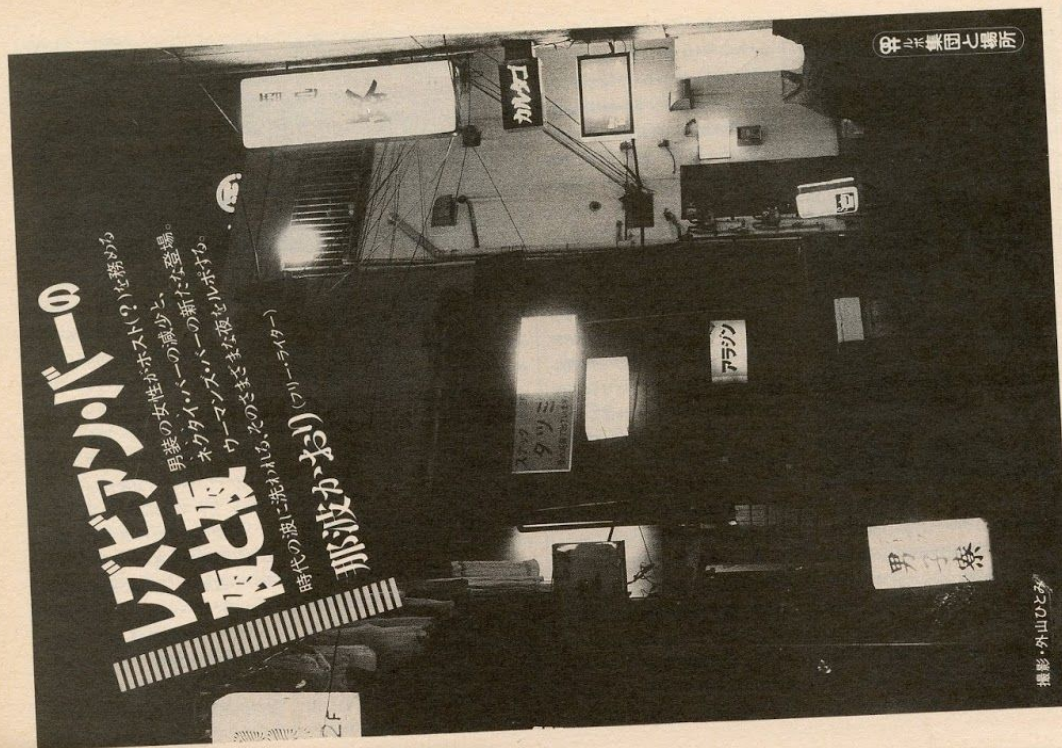
In this way, my first love was fulfilled. From the first time I met her, a year and nine months had elapsed. Because we were close in testing, we could discuss and stay overnight at each other's houses, where time passed generously. When we were naked, she was more bold and developed more quickly than I did. Our caresses were repeated trial and error so we could

obtain pleasure. Like that a faraway girl became close. Furthermore she felt the ecstasy in my caresses. To please your lover ---- it is a real pleasure that is can't be replaced by anything.

However, our relationship did not last long. At first, I was dignified like Rhett Butler, encasing her in as to try to love her, but soon I began to feel that I could not perform a loving role "like men". And so inside I worried, I was frustrated that we weren't understanding each other.

In the summer of my third year of high school, her mom began to notice our relationship, so Yoko put distance between the two of us. When we entered college, she quickly got a boyfriend, and at the same time that she graduated college she got married. It's hard to forget her but as trajectories change, when I first entered college I made friends and acquaintances with boys. However, besides feeling that these boys were pretty or cute, it was made obvious that I didn't have feelings for them.

After that, I got the chance to meet several women, I had loving relationships. Within those women, the person they wished for was a more "masculine" woman. While routinely suppressing my nausea, I presented as "feminine". I was a woman who loved women. I was not a substitute for men. I had projected a "female" type, and did not escape traditional femininity to become a "man". My carefree heart could not be put into a box, and the world detested that. Therefore, in order to love women, I found little importance in "becoming a man". Whomever I tried to love, so I would be loved, I would be me.



八人がゆかに座れる黒い大振りのカウンターが店の中心にある。その後ろにダイク・レッドのソファとテーブル。全体の広さは八坪ほど。天井では一頭カフエバーのトレッドミークだったあの大きな扇風機がゆっくり回り、ジャズ・ピアノが低く流れる店の空気をいかに気遣うようにかきまわっている。

店は親密な空気に溢れていた

私は、生まれて初めて、レスビアン・バーのカウンター席に身をおいた。つい一カ月前ほど前までは、ホモ・バーが軒を並べる新宿二丁目の一角にこんな店があることを知らなかった。ホモ・バーがこんなに群をなしているのだから、その逆の形態としてのレス・バーがあつてもちつともおかしくはない。今からすると、それを思いつかなかったのが不思議なくらいである。

カウンターの中で、この「マーズ・バー」の女主人、マリーと山口雅美さん仮名が忙しく立ち働いていた。女主人といっても、まだ二十七歳。つややかな肌と頬のふつくした面たちのせいか、年齢より三、四歳

は若く見える。化粧はほとんどせず、耳もとにダイヤとゴールドのピアス。オレンジと深いグリーンに横縞のシャツにジーンズ、前髪がつんと上を向いたショート・ヘア。このボーイッシュな、見ようによつてはあどけなくも映る女性が、夜七時から深夜、ときには明け方まで一人でこの店を切り盛りしている。

柔らかな白熱灯の光の下で、三十代らしい二人の女性が談笑していた。二人とも細い銀縁眼鏡にカシミアなパンツ・ルックという似た着こなしである。しばらくして、そのうちの一人がマリーに声をかけた。「ちよつと出る。また戻ってくるわね」「どこへ行くの？ 怪しい！」とマリー。「恋人を探しに」

ジャケットをはおりながら、軽く笑つて女性が返す。

もし、この店にレスビアン・バーと知らず入ってきたら……。私は何も気づかないままに時を過ごし、立ち去つてゆくのかも知れない。男なら即座に門前払いを受けて事実を知るのだろうか、女なら気づかないことも充分ありうるような気がする。ごくふつうの酒場と比べて、この店に何か特別

な仕掛けがあるかという、けつしてそうではなかった。

「あのローランサンの二人の女性の絵は、マリーの趣味なの？」

「ううん。この店が前ホモ・バーだったときからずっとあそこには掛かってた」

私はレスビアン・バーらしい証を求めて、店の中を眺めわたしてみた。「れ組スタジオ 東京開設記念仮義パーティー 女の春祭り」とワイプロで打った小さなポスター、平塚らいてうや伊藤野枝の肖像を刷り込んだカレンダーを壁に見つけた。

けれどそのうちに、この酒場がふつうの店とどこか違うところがあるとすれば、それは物や形として目に見えるものではない、ということに気がついた。空気だった。親密な空気で、ともなうものが酒場全体を包んでいた。

「秘められた」とか「ひっそり隠された」とか、そんな雰囲気ではない。むしろ、家族的な——といつても食卓のまわりで大騒ぎを演じるような賑やかな家族ではない。静かな家族。やっぱり、親密という言葉がいまふさわしいような気がした。

毎週月曜日のパーティーが
『リボンス』の始まりだった

取材したレズビアン・バーは次の三軒だった。

●「マーズ・バー」……一九八五年十二月開店。

●「リボンス」……「マーズ・バー」より半年早く、同じく新宿二丁目に女性専用をうたてて誕生。一九八五年十月開店。

●「貴公子」……いわゆる「おなべバー」の老舗。六本木。一九七三年九月開店。

これまでレズビアン・バーといえは「貴公子」のように、男装のレズビアン女性（通称おなべ）がフロアに出て客を接待する店を指すのが一般的だったとよくある。そこへ一昨年、「リボンス」「マーズ・バー」という女性専用をうたげた新しい店が出現し、レズビアン・バーの歴史に一つの新しい流れが加わるようになった。

二十年あまりのうちに、従来のスタンダードなレズビアン・バーは減少の一途にある。六本木の老舗店連中も、十三年前には八軒ほどあったおなべバーが、今は「貴公子」しか残されていない。店の軒数とし

てはまたおなべバーの方が多いとはいえない。取材途中で会ったかなりの人が「これからは『マーズ・バー』や『リボンス』のような店が増えてゆくでしょうね」と口を揃えていた。ある人は、さも当然というように。またある人は、なめ鼻を温めながら。

消えゆくおなべバーとともに、男役・女役、というレズビアン・バーの伝統的な役割分担もほとんど旧式なものとなってゆくようである。レズビアン・バーの世界も時代とともに変わってゆく。その流れは、レズビアン・バーの世界にも確実に影響を与えている。

*

「私、以前は完全にストレートだったの。男の子っぽい女の子に憧れたことはあったけど、初めての恋人は男性だった……」

ホモ・セクシュアルの街・新宿二丁目に初めて女性専用のバー「リボンス」を開いた富田ちなつさんが、開店の経緯を語った。赤いベレーザリ柄のシャツの胸もとにかかるとすくなくロンク・ヘア。ブラブラのイヤリング。いまだあゆみに似た立ちまわりと早口の手書き。ボイスである。「マーズ・バー」の山口さんと同じ二十七歳だが、

山口さんがボーイッシュでキョートなのに、村、喜田さんは女性っぽく、エレガントな印象を与える。

「……その恋人というのが、二丁目によく出入りしての。で、私も十八の頃から一緒にホモ・バーに行ったりしてた。すぐに分かったんだけど、彼、男の人も好きな男だったのね。うん、そういう星のめぐりあはれだったのかも」

十九歳のとき、初めて女性と恋愛。男と別れ、家を出てその女性と一緒に住み始めた。しかし二丁目通いをやめてしまった。それはなかった。

「女の子が好きだったわけじゃなくて、お酒が飲める店って、ホモ・バーしかなかったの。男にはホモ・バーがあるのに、女の子にはなくてさ。そういう店がないならうってきてもいいわ」

そんな折、「薔薇嬢」の編集兼発行人、伊藤文孝氏と知り合い、氏の経営する新宿のホモ・バー「祭」で毎週月曜日を女性の日と決め、レズビアンたちが集まるパーティーを主催してみないかと誘いを受ける。女性専用の店を持ちたいとは思っていたけれど、

どこまで経済的になりたつかわからない。試しにという気持ちで、その提案にのった。さつそく「薔薇嬢」の片隅にレズビアン・パーティーの開催を知らせる伝言板を打つ。一九八二年、ちなつさんが二十三歳のときだった。

その「祭」のパーティーが、女性専用バー「リボンス」の前身である。その三年後、再び伊藤文孝氏に誘われ、雇われママとして、ちなつさんは「リボンス」をオープンさせることになる。「リボンス」という名は好きな画家、金子匡義の絵本の名前にちなんで付けた。金子氏の承諾を得て、少女の絵を店の看板として掲げた「ONLY LADIES」と書き添えて。

広い瀟灑な店だった。赤い壁に赤い絨織。ちなつさんは、百合の模様のプリント地で店のソファをカバーアップした。開店当日には、近所のホモ・バーから十数個もの花輪が届き、客が店から溢れるほどの盛況だったという。その半年後に「マーズ・バー」を開くことになる山口さんが「リボンス」を訪れたのは、開店一カ月後のことである。

「それまであったが、女だけで遊べる

店って全然なかったんだもん。初めて『リボンス』に行ったらときはびっくりしたわ。へえ、いよいよか。あたしがやりたいと思ってること、はかにもちゃんと考えてた人がいたんだなあって」(山口)

フェミニズムの流れの中から
「マーズ・バー」は生まれた

「リボンス」のちなつさんがホモ・バーを運営させてみるという視点から新しいレズビアン・バーを発想していったのに対し、「マーズ・バー」の雅美さんは、フェミニズム運動のグループに参加した経験が一つの契機になっている。

中学校の頃から自分は女の子が好きだとはっきり自覚していた。でも、こんなことを考えているのは自分だけかもしれないという不安もずっと持っていた。と雅美さんは言う。高校三年のとき、フェミニズム運動のグループ「ホーキ星」が新宿に女性のためのフリー・スペースを提供しているという記事を雑誌「シタイロッド」で読んだ。「女の子だけが集まる場所ならきっと自分と同じ人もいるはず」——雅美さんは迷わず「ホーキ星」を訪ねた。

「最初から『私は女の子が好きですが、そういう人は来ますか?』って聞いた。そしたら『います。今日またまのパーティーがあるから出てみない?』って。こころが出てびっくり。みーんなアツちゃんみたいな人ばかり。ていうか、いわゆる活動



▲「マーズ・バー」

家タイアのレズビアン・フェミニストなのね。化粧つけなし、短髪でシーパンはいてアクセサリーは付けない、絶対女っぽく振舞わない。私、そのとき、お化粧してスカートのバイとールで気取ってお洒落して行つたのよ。そりやあ叩かれました」

レズビアンと一口に言っても、実に千差万別であることを雅美さんは知らされる。一年上の人からガンガン言われるの。フワフワしてる、お調子者だ、運動について何も理解していない……とにかく、そこでは眉毛をちやんと細くしただけでも世間の対象になっちゃうのね。一応グループに入つてはみたけど、やっぱりついて行けないっていう感覚はあつたよね。でもそんなのはっかりというわけでもなくて、友達でできた。なかに一人面白い人がいて、「このへん遊べるんだ」なんて言つて、二丁目のホモ・バーや「おなべバー」を教えてくれたの」

やがて雅美さんはその彼女と恋愛関係をもつようになった。高校卒業後、一緒に暮らすため、家を出る。親もとから独立し、生計をたてるために、〇として会社勤めが始まった。

「十八のときから、店を待つと思ってたの。それも絶対二丁目につてね」

〇L、雀荘のアルバイト、銀座のホステス、飲食業のノウハウを学ぶための居酒屋の従業員……さまざまな職業を転々とした後、一九八五年暮れ、新宿二丁目の雑居ビルの三階に、「FOR WOMEN」と看板をかかげた「マーズ・バー」がオープンする。

悩みごとを聞いてあげたい、でも聞きたくない

レズビアン・バーを訪れる女たちは実にさまざまである。

「マーズ・バー」はフェミニズム関係の人もけっこう来るんじゃない。短髪がすらすとカウンターに並んでることも多いし、外人も結構来るね。「リボンス」は、もう少し敷居かな、ホモの男の子なども時々遊びに来てるみたい」

二軒をよくはしごするという女性が、客層の違いを端的に説明してくれた。どちらの店も、客の年齢層は一七八歳からいたい四十代後半まで、平均すると二十代前半といったところだろう。「マーズ・バー」

には、結婚をせず仕事をもつて自活している女性が多く、「リボンス」の場合は、主婦もかなりいる。四十代で初めて女性との恋愛を経験した主婦どうしのカップルもいるらしく、子供を連れつけてからそつと家を出てくるのだそうだ。

ただ、レズビアン・バーを訪れるすべての女性がレズビアンかという点、けつしてそうではない。今日連れて来た子はあだしのこと何も知らないの。言わないでね」と耳打ちされることもある。ノンケレズビアンではない人として店にやって来て、レズビアンになつたという人もいる。

「リボンス」は昨年八月、伊藤文学氏の会社組織から独立し、広い店を引き取つて今のカウンターだけの小さな店に移転したが、「二十歳以上のカップルが今の店で知り合ったの」とちやつさんは嬉しそうに話す。

しかし、客の中にはカウンターの中にいる女主人を目当てに来る人もいるのではないだろうか。

「どこか来ることはしよつちよつ。でも、私は自分の恋人との生活が基本であつて、仕事は仕事。ボランティアじゃないんだも



▲「リボンス」

の。仕事として割り切る部分もあるわ。私だつて、店に好みの女の子が来たからつてとくわけじゃないしね」(ちやつ)

「私には一緒に暮らしている恋人がいるんだと説明しても、何の防波堤にもならないことだつてあるよ。女の子って恋愛至上主義みたいなところがあると思ふんだ。あわよくばもうまくやろうつていふんだにやなくて、思いこむと一途になっちゃうのね。べつたり甘えてくれたりして神経をすり減らすこともあるけど、避けられないことかもしれないわね。こういう店をやっている以上はね」(雅美)

客から悩みごとの相談を受けるのも、レズビアン・バーの場合、ぶつうの店のママやオナール以上にハードな仕事――

「昔の自分を見ているような気分になることもあるんだ。そういうの辛い。私、今はレズビアンとして楽しいことの方角に走りたいと思つているのに、真剣に話を聞きすぎると自分の中に葛藤が起こるのね。聞いてあげたい。でも聞きたくない……」

はなの一瞬の間を置いて、雅美さんは言葉を継いだ。

「だけど、私、悩んだつていうほど悩んで

ないのよ。だって好きなんだから、女の子のことが。誰にも止められないわよ」

みんな軽くなった。いや、軽くなりた。い。だ。軽く、明るく……。

二十三年で、 おなべバーは次々と消えていった

六本木・防衛庁の向かいのビル地下二階にある『真公子』は、おなべバーの老舗である。

東京で一番古いレズビアン・バーは、今から三十年ほど前、浅草に誕生した『夢の城』だった。もともとは街の小さなスタンダード・バーで、バー・コートの蝶ネクタイの女性バーテンダーが人気を呼び、広場所に店を移し、フロアにホステスを、長いカウンターに十名ほどの女性バーテンダーをずらりと並べて商売をしたという。その店も今はもうないが、『真公子』のマスター、水野眞貴代さん（四十歳）は、その店の出身である。

先にも少し書いたが、『真公子』のようなスタンダードなレズビアン・バーは、女性客のみを対象としているわけではなく、レズビアンのためのバーだからレズビアン・

バーなのではなく、むしろ男装のレズビアンが客を接待するからレズビアン・バーなのである。『真公子』の場合、客の約四割が、中年層の、しかもごくノーマルな男性だという。『銀座の若いホステスのように、ちらちらとやや御機嫌をとって疲れることもないから』『おなべは気がおけないから』と言って、男たちは、おなべバーに通う。深夜遅く、銀座のクラブの客がホステスを伴って流れてくることもある。おなべバーは、ゲイ・バーと並び、夜の遊び人たちのまよつと趣向を変えた遊び場所でもあるというわけだ。もともと、二十三年あまりのうちに、かなりの数のおなべバーが盛り場から次々に消えていった。

この店のマネージャー、木村洋二さんによれば、それはパチンコ屋とデイスコが六本木に進出を始めた頃からだ、という。『六本木の交差点近辺でも、大小より選んで七、八軒はあったのに今はうちだけ。一軒に七、八人はいたから、五十人以上のおなべがとつか行っちゃったわけですよ。ほんと、そういうのはやっぱり寂しいですよ』テーブルの上で組んだ木村さんの指に、金の平打ちの指輪が光っていた。棚のびっ

しりときいた袖口にはカフス・ボタン。その下にゴールドのブレスレットがちらりと覗いている。

一目で高価な生地と見てとれる紺のスーツに、濃紺のネクタイ。香りはエルメスのアマゾン。磨きあげられた黒い革靴。このいかにも、水商売のお洒落。然とした装いが包みこんでいるのは、ほっそりとした華奢なからだである。頭はほとんど坊主に近いほど刈り込んでいるが、私にはそれが男の、ヘア・スタイルというより、制髪した男の子のように見える。化粧の習慣がないせいで、三十五歳という年齢が信じられないほど、皮膚の肌目が整っている。端整な印象を与える顔だ。

この店に入つて七年になる。フロアには、マネージャーの木村さんの下に、それぞれ勤続年数六年、五年、四年、一年の男装の女性がいる。ゲイ・ボーイたちがあちこちの店を移る変わるのに対し、おなべたちの定着率は非常に高い。

ビルの地下のワンフロアがまるごと店のスペースになっている。天井にシャンデリア、シートがカラオケ・ボックスをコの字型に取り囲むようにして三方の壁に並ん

でいる。ちやうど真向かいの、とらつても五メートル以上離れたシートに二十代の、らしい三人連れが座り、スツールに腰かけた男装の女性が三人の相手をしていく。シャンデリアの光の向こうに浮かぶそのシルエットに目を凝らしてみても、ほとんど男性か女性か見分けがつかない。

私は目の前の木村さんに、「どうしてこういうお店に勤めるようになったんですか」と訊ねた。訊ねてから、「あ、だぶんこういう質問は今までもさんざん客からされてきたのじゃない」と付け加えた。

「何度も聞くこと、別になんともないよ」と木村さんは笑って言った。

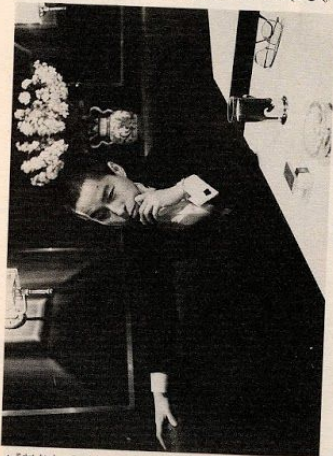
クロウは、 身持ちが固いんだよ

子供の頃から男の子の恰好しかしなかった。親にズボンを買ってくれとせがんだ。中学校の三年間だけ、いやいやセーラー服を着たが、それ以外にスカートをはいだことはない。親は、女の嗜好をしらとけつして無理強いしなかった。ほんの小さな子供の頃から男の子の嗜好をしていたので、近所の人なども、あの子供は昔からあんな

だ」と、見慣れて納得してしまっていたような気がする。

中学を卒業して、美術系の専門学校生になった。今からおよそ二十年前、街にはアイビー・ルックの若者が溢れていた。木村さんも、頭を流汗のクリ・カットに刈り上げ、スタジャンを着て街を歩いた。

そんなある日、お茶が飲みたいくて何の気



▲真公子の木村洋二さん

なしに入った喫茶店で、ママから「まだいらつしやい」と妙に優しく声をかけられた。ママとその店の雰囲気にとろけられるものがあつて、木村さんはしばらくその店に通うようになる。そのうちまたママから「今度は後にいらつしやい」と声がかかった。「同じ店のドアを開けたら、なんと、ぼくと同じ恰好をした人がずらつといました」

それが、木村さんにとっておなべバーとの初めての出会いだった。母はつうの喫茶店だが、後だけおなべバーに变身するという店だったのである。

それから二年後、木村さんはおなべバーの従業員となった。以後ずっとこの道一本である。女性との恋愛は店に動機始めて以降のこと。最初の人は、「何こうからアタックしてきた」ストレートの女性だった。「相手がレズビアンだから好きになるっていうことはならね。レズビアン女性しか好きになれないっていうのは不自然な気がするよ。というか、女の子はほんとにとって異性だから……。異性だから好きになるんだよ」

「女の子から食べさせてって言われたら

どうしますか？

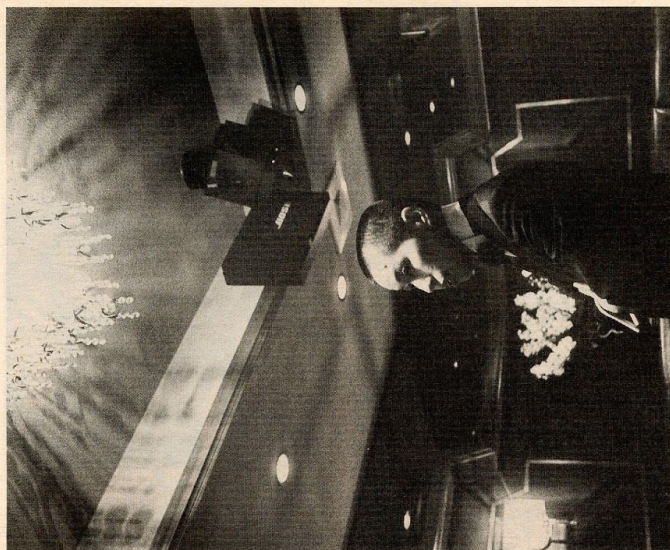
「うれしいね。ぼくの収入で暮らしていい人なら、ぼくは毎日、納豆と味噌の聞かてもいいよ。一緒に暮らす女性には別に金を稼いでくれなくてもいいと思う。でも、仕事が出来ないという女の人もあるでしょ？ それはその人の自由だしね。仕事をやめてくれって言って、断られたこともあったよね」

——浮気はしますか？

「昔は隙を見ては浮気してた時代もあったけど、今はそうじゃないね。それに、店の看板しよってるっていう意識があるから、いい加減に女の子と遊べないよ。だいたい身持ちが固いんだよ、クロウトの方が」

新しいレスビアンたちは 血のつながらない家族だ

木村さんと話しながら、私は不思議に気がやらいでいた。長年の接客業によって培われた会話のテクニックや人あしらいのうまさだけではない。木村さん自身の人柄の持つ安定感になによりも私をほつとさせたいような気がする。木村さんは「クロウト」という言葉を使ったが、その安定感



は彼女の職業意識の強さと深く関わっているに違いないだろう。木村さんは、おなべという職種を選びとることによって、社会の中にとりあえず納まりのよい場所を確保したいレスビアンなのだ、と私は思う。ワイシヤ

ッを着てネクタイを結んだところから、木村さんは私生活と切り離し、おなべという仕事の顔を作って世間の中に出て行く。『リボンス』のちなつさんや『アース・バー』の雅美さんに、木村さんのような職業意識

Lesbian Bar: Evening and Night

By: Kaori Nanami

At the center of the store is an oversized black counter that sits well over eight people. In the back is a dark red sofa and table. The overall size is about twenty four square meters. The big fan on the ceiling that turned slowly was the trademark of a café bar some time ago, it listlessly stirred up the flowing piano music.

The Store Was Bursting With an Intimate Atmosphere

For the first time in my life, I put myself in a seat at a lesbian bar. Up until a month ago, I did not even know that there was such a shop in Shinjuku ni-Chome where gay bars aligned the buildings. Because the Gay bars are grouped here, it is not funny that in the reverse there are lesbian bars as well. Looking at it now it is strange that I did not think of this.

In the middle of the counter, the Queen of “Mar’s Bars,” Yamaguchi Masami (alias) busily goes about her work. I say queen but, she’s just 27 years old. Probably because of her full face, cheeks and shiny skin, she looks younger by three or four years. She doesn’t wear much make up and she has diamond and gold earrings on. She is wearing jeans and an orange and deep green T-Shirt, she has short hair with bangs that forcibly go upwards. Due to the fact that she is a boyish woman who projects innocence, from 7 at night to late at night, sometimes until dawn, she would manage the shop alone.

Under the soft light of the incandescent lamp, two people who look like they're in their thirties are chatting. They were both in similar casual pants look and thin silver-rimmed glasses. After a short while, one of them shouts out to Masami.

"Hey, I'm leaving. I'll be back"

"Where are you going? That's suspicious" said Masami.

"Going to look for my lover"

While putting on her jacket, the women laugh lightly.

If you entered this bar and did not know that it was a lesbian bar I might have left after I spent time and remained unaware. If you were a man, the truth is you would know that you would be immediately turned away at the front door, if you are a woman it is probable that you wouldn't notice this. Compared to an ordinary tavern, you would say this shop has a special gimmick, and that's not the case at all.

"Laurencin poster of the painting of the two women, is that your pastime Masami's?"

"No. it has been hanging there from when this bar was a Gay bar."

I was seeking a symbol of a lesbian bar and people looked at me from across the room. There is a small word processor poster on that has "Regumi Studio's Women's Spring Festival Inaugural Costume Party is in Tokyo" on it, and you can find a calendar on the wall that has illustrated portraits by Hiratsuka Raichou and Itou Noe.

But to those inside, this tavern is a place different from an ordinary shop, I have realized it is not indented to be visible through shapes and objects. It was in the atmosphere. That you could even say it was the atmosphere that wrapped the whole bar.

“It is hidden” and “it was concealed inconspicuously,” that was not the atmosphere.

Rather, it is familial but ... it is not so much a lively family, like having an uproar around the table. It is a quiet family. Still, the word intimate is the most suitable.

Every week's Monday party was the beginning of “Ribone”

The next three points are Lesbian bars that I collected data on.

- “Mar’s Bar”: Opened December 1985
- “Ribone”: opened a half a year early than “Mars Bar,” it is in the same part of Shinjuku Ni-Chome came into being for the exclusive use of women. It opened June 1985.
- “Noble Youth”: or a so-called ‘Onabe’ Bar was the first of it’s kind. It’s famous to Roppongi. It opened September 1973.

Up until now if you talked about ‘lesbian bars’ it would refer to stores like “Noble Youth” where it was common for cross dressing lesbian women (nicknamed: Onabe) would entertain guest out on the floor. The year before last, the arrival of these two stores “Riborn,” and “Mars Bar” was dedicated to female costumers only, it was supposed to be the new wave of Lesbian bar’s in history.

Within the past decade, the lesbian bar conventional standard has steadily decreased. Also at the intersection by Roppongi, ten years prior there where about eight other Onabe Bars, but now only “Noble Youth” is left. Still, despite the number there’s more Onabe bars, and I meet a substantial amount of people while I was in the middle of data collection, which I had verbally gathered that “from now there would be an increase in stores like ‘Mars Bar’ and ‘Ribone’”. Some people say it’s natural. And others just sigh.

Along with the vanishing Onabe bars, the traditional lesbian division of roles, “butch” and “Femme,” have steadily become old style too. The world of lesbians has also changed with the times. The flow of the world is influencing the lesbian bars.

* * *

“Before I was completely straight. Even though I admired masculine women, my first time lover was a man ...”

In the city of Homosexuals, Shinjuku ni-Chome, I investigated the details of the opening of Tomida Chinatsu’s (alias) first bar that catered to women “Ribone”. She has straight long hair that hangs down, and a red Paisley pattern shirt. She has a thin layer of brown make up, gold earrings, and a fast talking husky voice. She is the same age as “Mars Bar’s” Yamaguchi, 27 but, Yamaguchi is boyish and cute in contrast Tomida gives a feminine, and elegant impression.

“ That person who is my lover, often came and went from Ni-Chome with me. Since I was around 18 we went together to Gay bars. I quickly understood that he was a man also liked men. Ya, but it was fate.”

When Chinatsu was 19, she had her first girlfriend. She broke up with her boyfriend, left her house and started to live with her partner. And she finally stopped going to Ni-Chome.

“I would go out and drink at bars, where I was open to flirt with women, but it was only at Gay bars. Men have gay bars, and that was why I thought why don’t women have these types of bars too.”

In a chance meeting Chinatsu made the acquaintance with “Barazoku’s” editor and issuer, Mr. Itou, every week on Monday at Shinjuku’s Gay bar “Matsuri” which was under the

management of Mr. Itou, Tomida received the invitation to a party that the bar might try to host for lesbians. But she thought about it and I want to have a store dedicated to women but she realized didn't know how it would work from a management perspective. With the feeling of wanting to see how it would work, she took the proposal. At once she thought about putting this ad in the remote corner of magazines so to inform others of the "Barazuku's" lesbian party. In 1982, Chinatsu was 23.

"Matsuri's" party, for women only was "Ribone's" predecessor. Three years afterwards, Mr. Itou invited Chinatsu, and employed her as a bar Mama, Chintsu arranged that "Ribone" would open. The name "Ribone" comes from the name of one of her favorite painters; it is named after Kaneko Tadayoshi's picture book. With Kaneko's consent, Chinatsu displayed a picture of a girl as the shop's sign. With the added post script "ONLY LADIES".

It was a stylish bar. There was a red design on the red wall. Chinatsu, covered up the sofa with a print of a pattern of lilies. On the opening day, many garlands were delivered from the neighborhoods Gay bars, it was so much of a success that customers were overflowing from the bar. A month after that Yamaguchi who decided to open "Mars bar" visited "Ribone," and six months later "Mar's Bar" opened.

"Up until then we didn't have any bar we could go to so we could play with women. I was surprised at first when I went to 'Ribone'. Eh! Finally! I thought I wanted to try my own bar, but there are other people who want to do the same." (Yamaguchi)

Mars Bar was Born Out of the Wave of Feminism

“Ribone’s” Chinatsu conceived a new type of Lesbian bar which was the reverse of gay bars whereas “Mars Bar’s” Masami who has had the opportunity to participate in a things like the feminist movement

By the time she was in middle school she was aware that she liked women. But Masami had anxiety about them since she thought she was the only one who had those feelings. In her second year of high school, she read an article in a magazine called “City Road” that was by the feminist movement group “Hoki star” who offered a free space for women in Shinjuku. ‘If you gather in a place that has only women, there will surely be people the same as you’ ---- without a doubt Masami visited ‘Hoki star’.

“From the beginning I heard ‘I like women but are there people like that that come here?’ And then ‘they’re here. By chance there is a party so do I want to go?’ However I was surprised when I went out. Everyone looked only looked like a contemptible person. I mean, these so-called activist, lesbian, feminist type. They don’t wear make-up, have short hair and wear jean pants, with no accessories, and they absolutely do not behave like women. At that time, I wore make-up, strutted in high heels and a skirt, and was stylish. That was criticized.”

Even if you say lesbian are only one, Masami informed me that really there are an infinite variety of them.

“We were being told intense things by the seniors. The person who was easily elated, in terms of activism will solve nothing Anyway, you became a target of criticism if your participation was not up to par. I wanted to enter the popular group but I had a sense that I could not. But there was not only that group of people so I was able to make friends. There was one

interesting person, who said that she “played around here,” and taught me about Ni-Chome’s Gay and Onabe Bars.”

Soon Masami had a sexual relationship with that woman. After her high school graduation, in order to live together Masami left home. She lived independently from her parents and for a living started working as an office lady.

“When I was 18, I thought ‘let’s have a bar’. And from then on I have been in Ni-Chome.”

She work part time as an office lady, in a Mahjong parlor, as a Ginza hostess in order to learn the knowhow of the restaurant business ... After she moved around various occupations, at the end of 1985, on the third floor of a multi-tenant building in Ni-Chome she hung a sign “FOR WOMEN” and ‘Mars Bar’ officially opened.

I Want You to Listen to Their troubles, But I Don’t Want to Listen.

There are actually various kinds of women who visit lesbian bars.

“Don’t the people who have a relationship to feminism go to ‘Mars Bar’? There are many people who have short hair who line up at the counter, foreigners also come. ‘Ribone’ is full of smooth talkers, and Gay boys sometimes try to play there as well.”

There are women who often go barhopping between Ribone and Mars Bar, the difference in customers was straightforwardly explained to me. Whichever shop, the customers age range is from 17, 18 to their mid to late forties, when you average the age range is probably around the early to mid-twenties. At ‘Mars Bar’ there are many women who support themselves by working

and not getting married, at 'Ribone' they prefer being housewives. It's hearsay that there are quite a lot of these housewives that have experienced love with another housewives for the first time, after lulling their children to sleep they probably snuck out of the house.

However, it is probably not the case that every women who visits a lesbian bar calls herself a lesbian. People whisper into one another's ear "the girl I brought today does not know anything. Please don't say anything." They come to the bar as straight people and leave as lesbians.

Last August Ribone, independent of Mr. Itou's social organization, vacated their old wide bar, and has been relocated to a small shop with only one counter but "already ten or more sets of couples have met at *this* store" Chinatsu happily said to me.

However, aren't there some customers come to get the hostess who works behind the counter ...

"It is easy to be persuaded. But I have a life with my partner, work is separate. I am not a volunteer. There is the part that is divisible from work. Even me, which I won't hit on girl I like, but at work I'm off limits. " (Chinatsu)

"Even though I explain that I have a lover who I live together with, that does not stop people from flirting with me. I think those girls just want to love for love's sake. With a little bit of luck, rather than not doing it well, you could become earnest. Dependence on others wears away at one's nerves but you would probably cannot avoid it as long as you're running a bar like this." (Masami)

I am consulted on customer worries, in a lesbian bar, it is more than just being a regular bar owner.

“It looks like me from a long time ago. It’s kind of painful. Now as a lesbian I want to run in the direction of fun, but when I listen to too much of a serious conversation a conflict inside me occurs. I want to listen. But I don’t want to listen”

In a fraction of a second Masami continued her remark.

“But, the more worried I get the more worried my customers aren’t. I like it because it is a woman’s thing. I won’t stop for anyone.”

Do people become lighter? No, they want to be. The light and bright ...

In the Last Decade, Onabe Bars Disappeared One After Another

In the basement of the building opposite of Roppongi’s Defense Agency. There is the old Onabe Bar, “Noble Youth”.

It is Tokyo’s oldest lesbian bar, from over 30 years ago; it was established in Asakusa and was “The Castle of Dreams”. Originally, in this small standing bar the female bartenders were the popular attraction and the dress code was for them to wear a bow tie; then the store moved to a larger space, and the female bartenders, about ten people, would line up in a row along the long bar counter to hostess the floor, that was how they worked. This bar no longer exists but it was “Noble Youth’s” master, Mizuno Masadai (45 years old), place of origin.

As I wrote a little earlier, standard lesbian bars like “Noble Youth” do not only target female customers. It is not a lesbian bar because it’s for lesbians, rather it is a lesbian bar where lesbian women dressed as men entertain guests. About 40 % of Noble Youth’s customers are middle-aged, and look like normal men. People say “you are pampered by hostesses like Ginza’s

young hostess and it's never tiring," "It is easy to get on with," and men, go to Onabe bars. Late at night, Ginza club customer's make their way over to Roppongi's hostesses. Onabe and Gay bars put a different twist on things for night partiers. Within a decade or so, a significant number of Onabe bar's have disappeared one after another.

According to the store's manager, Kimura Yoji, this happened in conjunction with the opening of pachinko slots and disco bars in Roppongi.

"Now at the intersection of Roppongi where there were mix of seven or eight large and small stores and now there's only mine. One store can have 7 or 8 people so there for one can conclude that the other Onabe went somewhere. This sort of thing makes me lonely."

Kimura was at the table clasping her hands with a ring of gold. I heard that their cuffs are crisp with starch. I caught a glimpse of her gold bracelet underneath.

At a glance the navy blue suit looks expensive with its dark blue neck tie. The aroma is Hermes Amazon. And her black leather shoes have been polished. This phrase "style of night entertainers" attire is embodied by a slender, delicate body. While her head is clipped, closed to shaved, I say that it looks like a nun who shaved her head more than a man's hair style. It's unbelievable that at 35 their skin is so smooth, is it because there is no custom for makeup. It is her face that gives a graceful impression.

It has been seven years since I went to this bar. There are women who dress as men here that have been here for one, four, seven, eight years of continuous service under Kimura's management. While Gay boys bar hop, the percentage of Onabe that become stay is unusually high.

The whole store became the space in the basement floor. The ceiling has a chandelier, the booths are arranged on three sides of the wall to surround the Karaoke box in the shape of an arc. Directly opposite, about five meters away there is a party three Office lady looking people in their 20's sitting on the seats, and women who are dressed as men accompany them sitting on stools. Try as you may to strain your eyes to the silhouettes floating beyond the chandelier light, men and women are indistinguishable.

I asked Kimura "why do you come to work at a shop like this?" After I questioned, I continued "Ah, you must be tired of being asked that over and over."

"No matter how many times I'm asked that, I really don't mind," she said with a laugh.

Nightlife Professional Personas Have Tough Behavior

From childhood Kimura only dressed as a boy. Her parents bought her pants. Only from her third year in middle school, she wore a sailor uniform that she hated, with the exception that she didn't wear a skirt. Her parents, in no way, pressured her to dress as a woman. Since she had been dressing as a boy since she was a small child, her neighbors said "that she has been like that from long ago," and there you could gather that they were used to seeing that.

She graduated from middle school, and became a vocational student of the fine arts. Twenty years before now, this street was filled with young people with the Ivy League look. Kimura too trimmed her hair to a crew cut, and walked down the street in a college jacket.

One day, wanting to drink tea she entered a coffee shop without any care and was welcomed in a strangely gentle voice by the owner. She was charmed by the store's owner and

its ambiance, and for a while Kimura became a regular at the store. While she was a regular at the store the shop owner said owner said "Next time come at night".

"If you opened that same shops door, there were people with the same dress as me sitting in a row!"

That was Kimura's first encounter with an Onabe Bar. During the day it was a regular coffee shop but it was a shop that only at night would transform into an Onabe bar.

Two years after that, Kimura became an Onabe bar employee. Here on after it was a one way street. After she started working at the store love with a woman was inevitable. The first person, a straight woman, who so to speak "came at me from the other side" ----

"Because my lover is lesbian does not mean she will be the favored. I don't only like lesbian women, it is unnatural to feel that way. Since the girls are like the opposite sex for me ... I began to like them because they are the opposite sex" said the straight women from before.

--- What do you if from a woman you were told "Please support me"?

"I'm glad. I'll live very humbly if some can life off my salary, I'm happy to support them. I thought that the women who would live with me shouldn't have to earn separate money. But there are probably women who want to work as well. It is her choice. I have been rejected when I have said to women "please quit your job."

--- did you cheat?

"There used to be a time when I saw an opportunity I would jump on it but now I don't. And, because of the store's sign, I can't irresponsibly play women. I generally have firm morals, this is my position in the place I work"

A New Lesbian Family That is Not Connected Through Blood

While I was talking to Kimura oddly my mind was peaceful. It was not just a good conversations techniques with someone that was cultivated by the long standing hospitality industry. Kimura has a sense of stability with her individual personality and more than anything it makes me feel relieved. Kimura used the word “professional persona” but is that sense of stability not deeply tied up with the strength of her professionalism. I thought that Kimura by choosing to have an occupation as an Onabe Lesbian was secured for the time being in a good place in society. Since she is wearing a dress shirt and has a necktie on, Kimura is disconnected with her private life, and for them this is a place where they can go out in society ----- Ribone’s Chinatsu and Mars Bar’s Masami don’t have the type of professionalism that Kimura does. No, they don’t. As long as they prohibit the coming and going of men it is isolating. Lesbians who as pioneers put themselves in a place that isn’t mainstream. Compared to Ribone and Mars Bar who first started to eliminate men, Kimura’s Onabes are better off because they work within existing social standards. Presence of a woman who behaves like a man is puzzling for society but, calls herself an Onabe and she has a job, she could be able to live as a man in the workplace. That is what Kimura’s mentor fabricated for Onabe’s, the art of managing in society as a woman was difficult, but this is also a limiting technique.

The dichotomy between men and women are really simple. Women who have men’s posture, and love women like men, at a glance they seem to switch roles, and this is the way lesbian relationships are more easily accepted in a world that does not know anything other than heterosexualism. Men are relieved. Why? This relationship is not the negative image of

heterosexuality, it's just reversed Male role? Woman's role? Heterosexual men love the classification system that divides men and women.

But, really, our outward appearance of the body must be one or the other but the person living inside is neither man nor woman. It is more transparent within a homosexual relationship, there is more ambiguity than heterosexual relationships. I think lesbians are more prone to understanding their sexuality.

But that sexuality is impossible grasp at and in truth is a thing that does not exactly overlap with anyone else. Even among a relationship between women, we use heterosexual relationships as a standard for our own, so we may be able to grasp our own partner's sexuality. Up till now the lesbians who choose male role or female role from the beginning have had fewer conflicts about their sexuality. After meeting Kimura I began to think about these things.

Ribone and Mars Bar were created and are located in the new flow of feminist lesbian movement. While those store appeared, the Onabe male role and female role bars disappeared. I saw an intimacy like family between the lesbians who stopped choosing between male and female roles. In regard to the feminine lesbian they are not regarded as partners for love, but serve as a connection for family relationships ----.

On top of the counters at Ni-Chome's lesbian bars, there are color photos that are piled up to a considerable height.

There is a small collection of snapshots of women at the bar. They are Onabe that are young women that are laughing with very short, curly, and long hair. They are laughing, young women, and older women. They are embracing other women, they are sleeping, with ambiguous

genders, they are dressed up, holding cats, in the middle of changing clothes, eating, frolicking, looking down, and fiddling with their hair ...

They looked like match making photos with invisible letters "woman wanted" written on it. But .. I think about it again.

Is that not a family photo album?

Within a nuclear family album, there are many photos with those sort of poses. In a bunch of stacked photos, an intimate family album of people that were not connected through blood was formed.

Three people's thoughts about Ten years later

---- What do you think about ten years in the future?

"In ten years? What will it be like? I don't even know what it'll be like in a year. Maybe in ten years, I think I'll be with a woman who likes women. The store, because there is this feeling of this place being a women's place, I want it to continue. Ya, Just as Ni-Chome became a gay city, I think in the future of this city will be a place for women, it'll be good. I want to become the old lady swaggering around." (Ribone, Chinatsu)

"The store will physically be here, but I won't continue for very long. Because I want the store to remain as is, I think I have to pass it on to someone who wants it. In the near future, I want to study again. I want to go to an American university. I like women and in order to pursue that I left my home, and probably gave of the chance of entering higher education. To truly live I

have given up on many of the things I wanted to do. One more time, I want to reclaim that dream.” (Mars Bar, Masami)

“If the Onabe community completely disappears I’ll be lonely. If one place is left standing and it’s Noble Youth that’ll be perfect. In order for that to happen I’ll have to work really hard at this job. On the other hand I feel as though I want to have a normal job that is a job where you work during the day and sleep at night. Occasionally I’d come here for a drink. Is there no such job? So in ten years I’ll probably still be here.” (Noble Youth, Yoji)