



Life Actually

15 January–21 March 2005

Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan

Curators: Kasahara Michiko and Yonezaki Kiyomi

Number of artists: 9 + 1 group

This exhibition was the 2005 iteration of the annual survey exhibitions held by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo. The essay is by Kasahara Michiko, the museum's curator. She starts by setting the conversation in the context of anglophone popular culture: the UK film version of *Bridget Jones' Diary* (2002) and the American TV series *Sex and the City* (1998 onwards). She contrasts the different attitudes of the film and series' protagonists to sex and a normative heterosexual partnership, and uses this to frame discussion of the subject matter of the exhibition's works. She follows a common introductory format of attending to each of the artists in turn, gathered under four subheadings: 'Representations of sexual pleasure', 'An exhilarating solitude', 'Family troubles and war', and 'Individualised subjectivity'. Notably, Michiko does not address the cultural and historical differences between the UK, the United States and Japan, nor the resulting differences in sexual politics, which indicates the problematic dominance of anglophone culture. However, these are implicit throughout; particularly as Michiko's conclusion returns to *Sex and the City*, and indicates women's changing conditions and consciousness in Japan.

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Life Actually; the Works of Contemporary Japanese Women – Love and Solitude, and Laughter for Survival in Japan

Kasahara Michiko

Introduction

In *Bridget Jones's Diary*, the film version of the best-selling British novel, the heroine exclaims, "I suddenly realized that unless something changed soon I was going to have a life where my major relationship was a bottle of wine and I'd die fat and alone and be found three weeks later half-eaten by Alsatians. Or I was about to turn into Glenn Close in *Fatal Attraction*."¹ The novel and film both give a lively account, humorous and ironic, of the everyday life of a single woman in her thirties living in London. This hit comedy attracted an empathetic response from many women throughout the world.² The original book and screenplay were both written by a woman in her thirties, and one might expect that the text reflected her true feelings ... Bridget anguishes and rejoices as she deals with the problems of love, work, friendship, diet, and family, getting through each day, even when things are not going as she hopes, with "love and laughter." Many readers and moviegoers saw themselves in Bridget. After watching the movie several times, I also recognized it as an accurate recreation of the voice of a thirty-something woman from the point of view of a woman of the same age, but there was one thing about it that bothered me. Bridget is blessed with a job, friends, family, and health, but she believes her life is wretched just because she does not have a boyfriend who might marry her, and no one around her disagrees with her view of things. This seems like a simple throwback to traditional ideas about the role of women. To a ludicrous extent, Bridget has internalized the fantasy that she will live happily ever after if she meets "Mr. Perfect" and enters into a monogamous relationship.

A quite different situation is presented in the American television drama, *Sex and the City*. A hit when first aired on the cable channel HBO in the United States in June 1998, it has run for six seasons. It has been shown in many other parts of the world, including Europe, Asia, and Oceania, developing a cult following and winning Emmies and other awards. The main characters of this series are women in their thirties, just like Bridget Jones, and the theme is similar. It depicts the lives and frank conversations of four young women of different types living in New York. The groundbreaking thing about *Sex and the City* (which also makes it a target of criticism) is that it allows women to express their real feelings and opinions about a variety of sexual issues through the semi-public medium of cable television. The women have sex with many different kinds of men, but their active sex life is not labeled negatively as "loose," "wanton," or "selfish." Instead, it

is assumed that the search for sexual pleasure is a woman's right, in fact, a basic human right.³ It is treated throughout as something positive and praiseworthy. The topics treated quite openly include women's orgasms, masturbation, oral sex, sadomasochism, adult toys, the clitoris, the penis, impotence, premature ejaculation, lesbianism, homosexuality, bisexuality, monogamy and alternative forms of pairing. Because the show is a comedy, the freewheeling conversations may be exaggerated, but these women laughingly demolish all the myths about women's sexuality constructed by men.

What especially differentiate themselves from Bridget Jones is that they do not make a direct connection between their relationships with boyfriends and marriage, even if pregnancy is involved. Still, they are not entirely free from the romantic ideology constructed by the modern family system, i.e., "meeting Mr. Right, marrying, and living happily ever after." Even Samantha, the most sexually liberated of the four, is trying to build a relationship with a compatible partner (not necessarily a man), and the other three do seem to want to find the right man, get married, and live happily ever after. Of course, these women sometimes use sex for the purpose of creating a relationship with a man, but they do not fall into despair if the relationship fails and they get hurt. They pick themselves up and find somebody new, continuing the search for "true love." At the same time, they are well aware that "true love" and "a happy marriage" are fantasies and myths. They have a dispassionate appreciation of the reality behind "happy marriages." They do not get upset when fantasy does not become reality. They see marriage as just one possible option in a relationship. The four best friends doll themselves up in the classical fashion of women who are trying to attract men. They pluck their eyebrows and keep their nails well manicured, wear low-cut designer brand dresses and fashionable high-heeled shoes. Their ideas, however, are radical: "Maybe we could be each other's soul mates. And then we could let men just be these great nice guys to have fun with."⁴ In addition, they do not have the "fear of success"⁵ internalized by women up until recent times, the fear that men will not love them if they succeed at work or gain position and wealth. They achieve success both at work and in their friendships, lifestyle, sex, love, and marriage as the result of their own choice. They are not afraid of failure. They take responsibility for failures that are the result of their own choice. They are portrayed as mature adult women who are psychologically and economically independent. Work, lifestyle, friendship, family, and lovers are just as, or more, important to them than marriage. Unlike Bridget Jones, they are not afraid to be alone and do not consider the single life "wretched."

Representations of Sexual Pleasure

The system of marriage has many aspects, but it is mainly a contract under which the partners agree on a mutual restriction of sexuality. This contract is supposedly applied to both the man and the woman, but in practice, throughout the ages, it has only restricted the freedom of the woman. Recently, however, while the contract entered into at marriage is accepted as a contract, in reality, women's sexual freedom, like that of men, is no longer restricted in the same way. Up through the 1980s, there was a taboo against single women thinking of their bodies as sexual entities, whatever may have been the situation of men. Now, it is regarded as natural for single women to be as sexually active as men. "Life has become much easier for single women now that the three pillars of the modern family – marriage, sex, and reproduction – have crumbled and not being married is no longer equated with not having a sex life."⁶

Sex and the City vividly portrays the changes occurring in sexuality, and the sexual freedom granted to women's bodies today, through the medium of television. So then, how is women's sexuality represented in contemporary art?

Women's sexual freedom is a basic right that has been pursued by the feminist movement since the 1960s. It goes without saying that women have not been able to control their own erotic life. It has been constructed, idealized, skewed, and mythologized by men, according to what they imagine it to be or want it to be. The search for women's sexuality by women began with the early feminist slogan: "Our bodies, our selves." It was based on a belief later set out in the theories of Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous: "If women are to discover and express who they are, and if they are to reveal what has been repressed in them by patriarchal history, they must first begin dealing with their own sexuality. Women's sexuality emerges from women's bodies, from the differences that separate women's genitalia and libidos from those of men."⁷

From the late 1960s to the present, such pioneering artists as Hannah Wilke, Judy Chicago, Miriam Schapiro, and Ana Mendieta have continued to explore women's sexuality. Hannah Wilke in particular, from early in her career to just before her death, used her own body to deal with types of eroticism that were previously taboo to women. *Intra-Venus* (1991–2), which was her last work, vividly expressed the fact that a woman's desires do not decline just because of old age or sickness. This is perfectly obvious on reflection, but it is something that was not recognized in the past.⁸

Although such male artists as Robert Mapplethorpe and David Wojnarowicz have produced extensive treatments of gay sex, there have been surprisingly few artworks depicting the sexual acts or pleasures of women. The work of Nan Goldin and Sam Taylor-Wood is an exception.

An example in this exhibition is *My lover shoots his load inside me. The sperm flows in my body. It is this moment when I feel most alive* (2004) by Mizoguchi Akiko OIC. As the title intimates, this sound and light installation directly depicts a woman's sexual pleasure. Bright red light is emitted from a tower four meters high equipped with more than 15,000 LEDs in 360 circuits. Sounds of breathing and heartbeat accompany the movement of the light, "flashing and fading like heartbeats"⁹ to represent the momentary and repeated pleasure of sex. The sounds of breathing and pulse and the directness of the title are counteracted by the effect of the moving lights, which look like living creators as they are projected from the tower onto the screen mounted around it, creating a vivid non-everyday space that recalls the experience of sex. The sounds and lights slow down and speed up, resonating with the breath and heartbeat of the viewer to create an experience that evokes a strong sense of being alive.

This work was produced as an experimental group project with the aims as an example of decentralization and de-essentialization in art by shifting the focus away from the individual artist. Mizoguchi Akiko, who is given the appellation OIC (organizer/interlocutor/critic), is listed as the artist. She is the organizer of the work but did not actually participate in the actual making of it. Technology was handled by Katori Akihiko, scenography, design, and concept by ZAPPA, and sound by Marc Boucrot. This decentralization of production gave more importance to the work itself than to the artist.

The sex portrayed by Mizoguchi Akiko OIC is not limited to the fantasy of an exclusive pair or a restricted relationship. It is an act carried out between people in an equal and symmetrical relationship. This collaborative production, which does not give prominence to any one individual, is appropriate to a pure tribute to the pleasures of sex.

An Exhilarating Solitude

In Japan today, many single people, myself included, are often subjected to the half-threatening, half-sympathetic comment: “If you stay single, you will be lonely, especially when you get old.” Is the single life as wretched or lonely as Bridget Jones, and many other people, think? Is solitude something to be feared? In reality, isn’t being single fun? I seriously doubt that being single means being lonely. But even if a single person feels lonely from time to time, I believe it is possible for solitude to be pleasant or even exhilarating. I sense the presence of this kind of solitude in the work of Ikemura Leiko and Watabiki Nobuko.

Young girls are the subject of Ikemura’s recent work. They are shown lying or standing along a single ray of light running along the horizon in a black space. In *Double Lying* (2000), two girls embrace, as if one of them were the alter ego of the other. In *Over the Gugliano* (1999), a girl holds a cat in the darkness. In *Standing in Blue* (1999), girls stand against an ultramarine background. The bronze girl (*Dolores*, 1998–9) covering her face with both hands in a work whose Spanish title means “pain” appears to be hurt and falling down but not dissolving in tears or indulging in suffering. She is silent and thoughtful, letting her body rest, sometimes dancing in the darkness even while remaining in a reclining position. The atmosphere is one of quiet resignation.

These are “mature girls” with intelligence, purity, and strength of spirit. They may represent the artist; I cannot help but see a self-portrait of Ikemura in them. As many critics have written,¹⁰ Ikemura’s experience of living overseas for some 30 years has had a decisive influence on her work.

Ikemura was born in the city of Tsu in Mie prefecture. She studied at Osaka University of Foreign Studies but left before graduating in 1972. She traveled to Spain the next year. After completing her studies at the art academy of Seville in 1978, she moved to Zurich, Switzerland, her husband’s hometown, in 1979. Ikemura soon received international recognition for paintings and sculpture that are silent meditations on her own inner state.

Living in a foreign country provides many opportunities for self-examination, both in the course of everyday life and in making art. While making art under such conditions, the self is defamiliarized. Encounters with different people and values and a different culture and language inevitably entail a confrontation with one’s self. No matter how well one adapts to a foreign environment or becomes skilled in a foreign language, a certain amount of ambiguity and insecurity remains. Living overseas, Ikemura became “mature” in spite of her small stature. She says of her art, “Rather than a self-portrait, there should be a ‘picture’ that visually shows an inner aspect of something at the core of myself.”¹¹

There is no trace of human presence in *yoru no umi* (2003–4), and a single shaft of light pierces the darkness in *In Black* (1999). These paintings present scenes of emptiness or some sort of unknown presence that hovers vaguely before our eyes. It can be seen as an irrepressible natural force or fate. Ikemura’s pictures are the products of a strong spirit, resolutely confronting and entering into realms of solitude, an infinite abyss that most people are afraid to look into. Her art is “quiet and invigorating.”¹²

In the work of Watabiki Nobuko, a sense of the uncanny is added to “exhilarating solitude.” *Be Revealed Nothingness* (2002) is dominated by a “black hole” in the shape of an onion. A single eye like that of a cat peers toward the viewer from the bottom of the hole. In *I Believe Both in Freedom and Resignation* (2000), a large black hole is depicted inside a green face with a red mouth and eyes that are turned upward, showing the whites. In *Space That Cannot Be Filled* (2003), a black space like a crater on the moon is shown against a UFO-like blue circle. Watabiki paints delicately with oil pastels on Japanese paper. “The slightly protruding fibers of the Japanese paper give

a delicate texture to the surface when it is seen directly.”¹³ The striking combination of colors resonates with the unique oval forms to give them a subtle sense of uncanniness and strangeness.

The words used in the titles, “emptiness,” “resignation,” and “sadness,” are obviously linked to the artist’s own feelings. She has written, “My art emerged from the feeling that human beings are something good. If human beings are good, then maybe I am good. This is the first word.”¹⁴ As this statement suggests, women in the past have tended to think, “I am no good as I am.” The oppressive system of the past enslaved them by making them think this way. In creating her art, Watabiki confronts the traces of this past in herself and reveals the nature of the system that has oppressed women.

During the first decade of her career, Watabiki made collages including photographs of herself as a child, drawings, and various objects on the surface of boxes. Examining these childhood photos one by one, she went back into the past, and confronted and questioned images of herself that she thought she understood. This approach is similar to that used by a number of women artists since the 1970s. An example is Jo Spence. Both Watabiki and Spence consider the expressions, poses, and situations in photographs of themselves, analyzing the ways in which they were photographed. Their work is a reconstructed self-portrait based on rediscovery of the process of their own socialization and reexamination of the history imprinted inside themselves.

Watabiki came to the end of this journey into the past “as if something that possessed me had fallen away,” and she began to paint. There was a development from representation to abstraction in her paintings, but throughout they have been consistently involved with observation of the inner self. Her paintings act to form connections with the world via dialogue with herself.

It is very difficult to take a completely positive view of one’s self. It can be a very lonely process to accept one’s own complexes, insecurities, and less likable traits; to say, “This me,” without falling into self-justification; and to face “emptiness,” “resignation,” and “sadness.” Humor is sometimes an effective means for dealing with difficult, complex problems. The unique and effective humor in Watabiki’s work is a result of intense loneliness. It is based on the “exhilarating solitude” that can be expressed only by a person blessed with the courage to peer into the darkness.

Family Troubles and War

In reflecting on solitude, one may well imagine that there is no one as lonely as a housewife who does not have the support of parents, friends, or other people.

Okada Hiroko’s new work, *Singin’ in the Pain* (2004), tells the story of a housewife’s suicide. “There was a housewife named H. She graduated from a very ordinary school and fell in love and got married in a very ordinary way. She had ordinary sex and gave birth to an ordinary child. She raised the child, went shopping, and cooked dinner in an ordinary way. One day, however, ...”¹⁵ The heroine is an “ordinary housewife” who seems happy in a conventional way. One day, however, she suddenly runs outside the house and begins dancing wildly to “Singin’ in the Rain.” Then she rushes back inside, picks up a knife, sticks it into her stomach, and dies. Actually, this scenario does not seem that farfetched in the context of the model nuclear family that became prominent in the 1970s, a husband who is a salaried office-worker, a full-time housewife, and two children. Although this family structure was once regarded as ideal, it has led to many serious problems in real life.

According to the psychiatrist, Saito Manabu,

The myth of the three-year-old child, the idea that children must be protected by their mother until the age of three, is still current. Because of this myth, mothers who enroll their children

in kindergarten are expected to be even more devoted to their children than before and lose themselves in caring for them. With such a life, there are probably few mothers who have not had moments when they would like to throw their children out. The fact that most mothers do not end up abusing their children proves that the mothers of Japan are quite noble.¹⁶

Mothers who are able to survive without becoming involved in tragedies of abuse or suicide may well be “noble,” but it is difficult to improve the situation by relying on the “nobility” of mothers and not doing anything about the modern family system that is the root cause of many problems. It is only natural that some mothers will be “ignoble.” This problem is not limited to Japan. Okada’s work recalls the American film, *The Hours*, which received an Academy Award for Best Actress in 2003.¹⁷ This film portrays the events of one day in the life of three different women who live in different historical periods. One of them resides in a Los Angeles suburb with her son and a kindly husband, who frequently gives her flowers. She is a full-time housewife who appears to be happy and to have no problems, and she is pregnant with a second child. To her husband and the world, she should be supremely happy, but she is actually in deep despair and comes very close to committing suicide to escape a life that has no meaning for her. After giving birth to the baby, she leaves her husband and two children. At the end of the film, she reflects on leaving her family, an act that she might be expected to be sorry for: “It would be wonderful to say you regretted it. It would be easy. But what does it mean? What does it mean to regret when you have no choice?” In depicting the loneliness and despair of an ordinary housewife, this story set in the America of the 1950s has something in common with Okada’s work, which deals with the present situation in Japan. The similarity of the stories set in such different time periods ironically reveals the difference in the historical and social position of American and Japanese women.

The “ordinary housewife” portrayed by Okada is a woman who has internalized “femininity,” the way of being a woman expected by society. Such women have adapted to the life cycle expected of women by the modern family system: meeting and marrying Mr. Right (or at least the person who they convince themselves is right), having children, and living an ordinary, happy life with their family. They execute this plan as if it were entirely natural.

There is no salvation for them because in Japanese society the alternatives of getting a good job or a divorce are not easily available. What makes it even harder for them is the fact that most people do not believe that they could possibly be lonely, especially in comparison to single women. Married women believe that they should not be lonely. If they are, they avoid recognizing the fact. They can neither face their own “loneliness” nor reject the fantasy that they and their family must be happy. Declaring that they are lonely to people around them would mean going public with their family problems and betraying the fantasy of the family that they depend on so much. Recognizing loneliness would lead to a serious identity crisis.

A previous work by Okada, *The Delivery by Male Project* (2004), presents one possible “post-family” solution. This humorous work, incorporating DVD, photography, and three-dimensional objects, makes fun of reactionary policies designed to reverse the declining birth rate that are based on the ideology of the modern family system and the application of medical technology to reproduction. Viewers sit on sofas like those found in the waiting room of a maternity ward to watch a video projected on a large screen. The 17-minute video is a documentary-style presentation of the story of a man who is chosen by lottery to give birth to a child and quits his job to prepare. As his stomach grows bigger, he visits the gynecologist with a happy smile on his face, listens intently to the doctor’s advice, attends classes for expectant mothers, and shops for baby clothes. A small monitor in the right-hand corner of the room gives instructions to the expectant father on how to take care of his body properly and analyzes the pressures and problems that might affect the child and the father if

a man were to give birth in contemporary society. The monitor is surrounded by photographs of pregnant men.

In treatments for sterility, in vitro fertilization and embryo transfer, or the use of surrogate mothers, the burdens of applying today's reproductive medicine are placed entirely on the body of the woman. In contrast, Okada's work suggests an application of reproductive technology that completely separates gender and reproduction. There is no indication of the sexual preference of the males who appear here. Also, there is nothing to suggest that the pregnant young men, who appear partially dressed and smiling in the photographs, are part of a monogamous relationship. In such a situation, the definitions of father, mother, and the family are subject to change. By separating gender and reproduction, and using the latest medical technology, it may be possible to create a society in which anyone could have the experience of having a child at any time they choose. This would not only be an ideal way to stop the decline in the birth rate but would help create a more ideal human community.

Singin' in the Pain, as the title indicates, is a parody of a cheerful musical comedy. If *Delivery by Male Project* depicts an ideal future, *Singin' in the Pain* focuses on the bitter realities of the present. Humor makes these works more effective in revealing the dark aspects inherent in the modern family system and giving them greater power to shock the viewer.

In present Japanese society, there is an invisible power that gently pursues you, like being gradually strangled with cotton. You back up little by little until you find yourself trapped inside a secure cage. Once inside this cage, you may be satisfied with the rest of your life, and if you are truly happy with it, no one has the right to interfere with your happiness. However, if you were able to take one step outside the cage ... as revealed in the work of Idemitsu Mako, a violent voice would crush you. (Chino Kaori)¹⁸

Idemitsu Mako is one of the most perceptive experimental film and video artists in Japan. Since making her first 8 mm film in 1970, she has continued producing works on the theme of family problems. *At Any Place 4: From the Tango of Housewife by Yoneyama Mamako* (1975) eloquently describes the everyday life of the housewife. *Hideo, It's Me, Mama* (1983) shows how mothers interfere with and try to dominate their sons' lives. The theme of *Kiyoko's Situation* (1989) deals with the suicide of a woman who is troubled because she is unable to abandon her personal dreams while trying to be a good daughter, wife, and mother. *Kae, Act Like a Girl!* (1996) continues to develop the same themes. Kae is married, but unlike Kiyoko, she is still trying to achieve independence as an artist. This is an exciting work that criticizes the systems of art education and art world. Idemitsu is herself a housewife with children who says, "I felt that I would go crazy if I let things go on in the same way without doing anything about it."¹⁹ She began making art because of a desperate feeling that she had to create something. She turned her personal experiences and thoughts into works of art related them to larger social problems that would capture the imagination of other people. The source of this series of films was the concrete presence of the "father," the patriarchal system that oppressed her and resisted her continuing struggle to get free.

The theme of Idemitsu's newest work, *The Past Ahead* (2004), is war and the family.²⁰ In this work, she directly confronts the problem of "the father." Idemitsu describes her own father as "male chauvinism wearing a suit."²¹ He was a self-made man who worked hard to achieve social and economic success. For Idemitsu, however, the concept of "the father" extends beyond her actual biological father. It includes her ex-husband, who acted "like an emperor,"²² the world of art and experimental film in Japan that dismissed her work with the hackneyed phrase, "female sensibility," and refused to take it seriously for many years, and the voice inside her that made her feel

guilty whenever she was about to work on her art, asking her if she did not have something better to do. She sees these people who have oppressed her as using a kind of “violence” that is equivalent to the violence in war. “The principle of war, control of others through power and violence, belongs to the fundamental nature of the patriarchal system. This is the basis of the system of war.”²³

Idemitsu’s *The Past Ahead* starts out with a group of slightly faded family photographs. They are portraits of an ideal family: two nervous younger sisters, a dignified father, a gentle-looking mother holding a baby, and other awkward children. They are followed and covered by news films and photographs from the Fifteen-Year War. These include images of war from Japan’s invasion of Asia to the war with America in the Pacific – battle ships, tanks and soldiers; crowds of fleeing people; kamikaze attacks and execution scenes, stories of comfort women and a list of rules for a military brothel; and finally, portraits of the emperor and the *torii* gates that stand in front of Shinto shrines. Under the extreme conditions of war, the fate of individuals is directly controlled by the national government regardless of their wishes. In Idemitsu’s *The Past Ahead*, individual memories and social memories overlap with representations of power relationships governing both the family and war.

For Idemitsu, who was born in 1940, these images of war are, literally, as the title suggests, from the “recent past.” These raw memories serve as the starting point of the postwar period, which exactly coincided with her own life and the lives of other members of her family, especially her sisters. However, the patterns of the family and war depicted in *The Past Ahead* are not truly in the past for her or for us. They still exist in the present and future. The soldiers, prisoners, comfort women, and ordinary citizens were undoubtedly “forced” to do what they did during wartime. In a similar way, without realizing it, we are forced to live under the warlike conditions of the present. The anxious-looking faces of the girls in the family picture could be me. The people running away could be the people of Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Chechen, or Sudan. The uncanniness of the atmosphere is heightened by juxtaposing the war news films with ideal family portraits.

Individualized memories of war are presented as problems that are still relevant to families today in Shimada Yoshiko’s new work, *Family Secrets – Bones in a Tansu* (2004). This installation consists of an ordinary room containing an ordinary Japanese wardrobe, tansu. As viewers open the drawers of the tansu one by one, they find photographs and prints accompanied by messages written in Japanese and English. For example, one drawer contains a photograph of a wrist with a small cube on it bearing the words, “Committed suicide.” Another drawer contains a collage of light-red prints of couples. On top of the collage, there are seven small round photo frames, three of them containing pictures of young Japanese and foreign couples. The other four contain the following sentences: “My mother’s cousin married a black soldier to put her brothers through college, but later, they disowned her.” “My aunt supported our family as a military prostitute after the war.” “My brother who is 46, unmarried and unemployed hides in his room all day.” “As my grandmother didn’t speak proper Japanese and wore only a chimachogon, we tried to hide her away when friends came to visit us.”

In each of these drawers is a family secret revealed by a member of a family. Every family has its problems, at least one or two secrets that it wants to conceal. The secrets may be truly awful or meaningless to someone outside of the family, but keeping them can be a psychological burden ... People can obtain some relief by revealing things locked up in their hearts even if they later hide them in a drawer. Viewers open the drawers one by one, peer at the family secrets of others, and close the drawers softly, perhaps feeling a bit embarrassed at eavesdropping on other people’s secrets.²⁴ They then enter a small space in the corner of the room covered with a curtain, like a confessional. There, they write down their own family secrets on a piece of paper and put them in a box. Shimada takes these anonymous family secrets and puts them into visual form, periodically replacing the contents of the drawers. This is the format of *Family Secrets – Bones in a Tansu*.

The history depicted by Idemitsu and Shimada is not history with a capital H, the history of the rise and fall of nations and political leaders. These artists bring out small histories residing in the memories concealed in individual minds. Each small history is important to the person it belongs to and contains truth that is a source of anguish. The small histories told by storytellers in the community come together to create the great “truth” of war and politics.

In Shimada’s *Made in Occupied Japan* (1998), the grand history of the postwar period in Japan is replaced by the small history of an individual woman to produce a work of art that upsets our feelings about history. This work is a collaboration with performance artist and sex worker, Bubu de la Madeleine. Bubu takes the role of a *pan pan* girl, a prostitute serving American soldiers, and Shimada takes the part of a soldier. Although this is a video work, the images do not move. Works are added to the each photograph of separate moments in the life of the woman played by BuBu.

To defeated men, the fact that women of their own country flock to the side of the victorious soldiers is unbearable, because this situation reproduces the shame of their defeat.²⁵

BuBu and Shimada present a woman who is a symbol of defeat and who exists at the bottom of society. She says,

I am a prostitute. I want to tell those who were and are prostitutes that there is nothing wrong with you. What one needs to live can be decided only by yourself.²⁶

What the oppressors fear and loath more than anything else is an individualized subject who can define her own place in society. The husband who exercises violence in the home becomes enraged if the wife and children he regards as his possession affirm their own identity. In war, the first people who are massacred are those who disagree with the oppressors even though they are considered to be marginal members of society or members of a lower class. If the women of a man’s own country, who he regards as his property, become the playthings of enemy men, he becomes angry at the women rather than the enemy. In the eyes of an oppressive husband or dictator, his wife or his people are seen as “others” who must willingly pay respect to him. “The structure of oppression is strongest when it is made unconscious and automatic.”²⁷ Conversely, resistance toward the oppressors can only be carried out by individualized subjects who can define themselves in society. It is necessary to attack the idea of the other, the idea that you are only an “other” to the oppressor.

Individualized Subjectivity

The modern family system is dependent on the establishment and reproduction of a gender-based division of labor, so it is being shaken by the disintegrating concept of the individual defined in relation to the family. Individuals are no longer able to define their identity in terms of the conventional family images and roles, the husband, wife, and children. “In the postmodern period ... there has been a strengthening of the idea of creating interconnections between diverse individual lifestyles that are voluntary and self-determined. Individualization means being able to define who one is in society.” It is “an important task to create a system that organizes society while recognizing this.”²⁸ If it is impossible to identify oneself with previous role models, separate individuals must experiment with individualized definitions of what they are in their own way.

The work of Sawada Tomoko is such an experiment in the process of individualization for one young woman.

She was born in 1977. In *ID 400* (1998), she took pictures of herself in ID photo booths throughout the city, dressed up as different types of women of her own generation. There are 400 of these different identities. There is a standard number of four bust shots, frontal views taken from the chest up, of each one. Because of the use of ID photos, the possibilities for expression are naturally limited. Within these conditions, she plays the roles of 400 women using her own face and body. There are only four variables: hairstyle, facial expression, makeup and clothing. She studied each role, carefully, selecting the hairstyle, facial expression, makeup, and clothing that best represented that person's individual qualities and characteristics and attempting to grasp the inner life of the woman shown outwardly in the photograph. In her next series, *OMIAI ♡* (2001), she took the role of 30 young women of her own generation in the type of photographs used to introduce the woman to a prospective marriage partner. She had them made by a commercial photography studio in the manner usual for such photographs. Another series was *COVER* (2002), in which she took the role of a *kogyaru*. This is a type of teenage girl who uses dark facial makeup, dyes her hair blond or light brown, and wears a distinctive style of clothing. After recreating the appearance of the *kogyaru*, who are often seen enjoying themselves unselfconsciously on the city streets, she made *Costume* (2003). This was a group of images of young working women in various environments, women a little older than the *kogyaru* but entirely different from them.

In a new work, *School Days* (2004), Sawada returns to her starting point. These are group photographs of school girls of the type often taken to commemorate such school events as entrance ceremonies, graduation ceremonies, and culture festivals. Their style is even more standardized than the ID photographs in *ID 400*. The uniformed girls stand in rows. There is a uniform interval between the first and second and the second and third rows. They stand in a predetermined position against the background of the school building or a cherry tree. The girls sitting down in front are even instructed on how to hold their hands. They are not allowed to express themselves in any way, goof around, or smile. They are required to close their mouths, face forward, and adopt a serious expression. School group photographs symbolize the Japanese education system, which makes children conform to standard ways of behaving rather than respecting their individuality. The girls themselves are afraid of being different from the group they belong to. They want to distinguish themselves from their friends to a certain extent but not enough to stand out from the group. They cannot bear to be alone, to be a person who stands out by acting differently from people around them or voicing different opinions. In *School Days*, Sawada shows the different character that each girl has, in spite of the many layers of restriction that are placed upon her, through slight changes in expression, hairstyle, and angle of the head. In this series, Sawada portrays the condition of young girls in today's Japan.

They cannot discover who they are, what they can do, or their own inimitable individuality. They just act like everyone else, never stick out from the group. They must study for examinations and seek jobs of the sort that meet their parents' expectations. At a young age, they are fully resigned to doing what is necessary to live in this country without a bright future.²⁹

The artist, herself a young woman, plays various roles of the young women who are often assigned a date for consumption like products in a supermarket and discussed in terms of their outward appearance, and she represents and explores the conditions that affect them. There is something symbolic about the title of the *Costume* series, which shows working women, including young inn matrons, corporate receptionists, boutique clerks, bar hostesses, and police women, in front of their places of work. It is based on an awareness of the tendency to lump young women together in the categories of "teenagers" or "girls," giving inordinate value to youth and appearance, and the

practice of judging young women by their outward appearance in work or marriage, contexts in which they should be judged by their ability in the workplace or their contribution to a mutual relationship. Sawada's work shows empathy for the young women who see through this reality and find it irritating but dress up in certain ways to meet the expectations of society. They must cover themselves with a mask or wear a costume as part of the great effort required to participate in society and survive in the present. This work is a light-hearted parody that ridicules the superficiality of contemporary culture and its emphasis on outward appearance. It is an act of individualization, an exploration of the artist's own appearance and inner reality as she continues to live in the present age.

Ichihara Hiroko expresses the true feelings of today's women, using words that are sometimes humorous and sometimes bitter. At first glance, her work seems like commercial copy. The difference is that a copywriter thinks up words that clearly describe the special features of a product, capture the atmosphere of the times, and appeal to the customer, while Ichihara creates phrase that directly convey the true feelings of (young) women living in contemporary Japan, coating them with "love and laughter." Any contemporary woman will chuckle with recognition when she encounters Ichihara's art or feel that she has "struck a nerve." Her words seem bold and direct, but they are actually quite subtle. She sometimes deals with feelings that a person would not usually put into words even though she was aware of them in her mind, things that would be too direct to say out loud because they would upset the listener. Shifting and changing the point of view and applying objectivity, she constructs phrases that are marvelously funny.

Ichihara's recent work, *Croquis* (1983–), is an installation that sums up the sources of all of her previous work involving words. She has mounted pages from the sketchbooks she uses to develop ideas for her word art on a gate placed in the middle of the atrium. There are more than 100 of the Maruman sketchbooks that she has used since she was a student. From reference material pertaining to her artworks to daily schedules, "everything about Ichihara can be found here."³⁰ Some phrases were immediately turned into artworks, and certain others were left alone for a while until one day they were suddenly transformed into art. Viewers can look over the sketchbook pages attached to the gate at their leisure, stretching to look up high or bending down, as they eventually enter into the world of words that Ichihara has assembled. This installation reveals Ichihara's growth as an artist and the sources of her ideas.

On the other side of the gate, we see a form like a silver mountain. Approaching more closely, we realize that the mountain is made up of small pieces of moveable lead type. Moving even closer, we find that there are only two characters on the pieces of type in the pile, *ai* (love) and *warai* (laughter). About 32,000 pieces of 28-point type ($1 \times 1 \times 2.3$ cm), about 16,000 each for two characters *ai* and *warai*, is piled up. This installation, which took much time to assemble, symbolizes the time and thought expended by the artist day after in making art based on the theme of love and laughter. It is also a homage to the craft of printing with moveable type. Ichihara was born into a family in the printing business, and this is one reason that she chose to use words as a means of expression in visual art. The methods of printing have changed drastically, "from arranging handwritten letters to monotype casting to electronic photocomposition."³¹ For Ichihara, however, the moveable type that was used for a long time in the family printing shop has strong personal associations. This is also true for the people at Dai Nippon Printing Company, who generously agreed to cast the 32,000 pieces of type for this installation at no cost. Dai Nippon Printing once boasted the largest moveable type printing facility in Japan,³² but it finally stopped using this method in April of this year (2004). Ichihara's installation expresses a desire to carry on the culture associated with moveable type printing, which once supported all the "knowledge" of the postwar world. It is a personal protest against forgetting.

And Where Are We Going?

Onodera Yuki's photographs provide a portrait of contemporary people.

In the series *How to Make a Pearl* (2000–2), she has created group images of a completely new and different kind. These forms are projected on the ceiling of a dark room from a circular light source. They do not make an exaggerated or emotionally intense statement. At the same time, they are not like people in a crowd who lose their identity in the group like a herd of sheep. The images of human figures in the large-scale prints are beautifully finished with great technical skill. The rough, blurred spots give the effect of half-tone printing. Each of the individuals in the quiet crowd has a strong presence and they are dearly distinguished from each other. The title, *How to Make a Pearl*, refers to the process of creating these images by placing glass balls in the camera to deflect the light entering from outside. Each particle in the crowd is a valuable pearl, suggesting new possibilities for the condition of human groups in the future.

In a recent work, *Transvest* (2002–3), contemporary human figures are depicted with back-lighted silhouettes. At first glance, one can only see the sharp outlines of the full size figure emphasized by strong back lighting. The facial expressions are not visible, and shadows of the feet are projected on the floor. The bodies seem to float in the air or sink toward the bottom of a body of water, mysteriously floating in a low-gravity atmosphere. These portraits, outlined clearly by light, are extremely expressive. From the silhouettes, one can imagine everything from the figures' faces to their personalities. Names such as Sophie, Wanda, and Dave are attached to them, but these are more like nicknames than proper names, referring to types of people who might be imagined from the silhouette. For example, a joyously dancing male figure is given the name Fred, referring to Fred Astaire, and a cute little girl with long hair is called "Alice," like "Alice in Wonderland."

The silhouettes are not uniformly black. There are some grayish areas that look like patterns, wrinkles, or folds in clothing covering the body. Moving closer and examining them more carefully, however, one sees that the areas resembling simple wrinkles or stains take on the appearance of expansive landscapes that could never exist in a photograph. They are collages of all sorts of different images, including rural landscapes photographed from the air, castles, baroque ornaments, insects, ladders, and water patterns. These images are arranged over the black surface in a way that makes it difficult to tell exactly what they are. Onodera has written,

In this work, images appear or disappear with slight changes in lighting. Like the camouflage of an insect responding to the detailed patterns of nature, like a very small insect that becomes transparent and assimilates itself to the world, appearing more vividly with changes of viewpoint.³³

The title she gives to this series, *Transvest*, ordinarily refers to the act of wearing the clothes of the opposite sex. Transvestites contest their biologically determined gender and the pressures of roles and conditions derived from it by wearing the clothing of the opposite sex, experimenting with the conditions of a gender appropriate to themselves. "The dark surfaces [of Onodera's photographs] are imprinted with something that emerges from the depths of that person."³⁴ Her art presents portraits of complex, anxious contemporary people, who show a typical face to the world but also have many other faces.

The knife that comes toward [me] increases its power around the body and its color (the color of blood) intensifies as it comes closer. As it strikes and begins to penetrate the body, it creates a flowing form, turning round and round, sparking off a chaotic nuclear fission

that creates heaven and earth. The knife is all of the things, including people, around me and also a tool for fighting. Since it is a weapon for cutting people as well as a general-purpose tool, if this were the purpose, it would be correct to use a Japanese sword as a motif. ... However, I thought that a fake knife that only had the shape of a knife was like me so that is what I used.³⁵

This statement was made by Konoike Tomoko, an artist who often uses images of knives in her work. *Knifer Life* (2000–1) shows thousands of knives, carefully drawn with a black pencil, that fly about in the air and form a vortex as they move in toward a young girl, completely covering her body and head, then fly away. Beautiful wolves with wide-open eyes emerge from the girl, swallow and spitting out the flying knives. They jump and romp about, roaring and howling with joy. In a new work, *Chapter Four “The Return”– Sirius Odyssey* (2004), the wolves coming out of the girl do not move outward as in *Knifer Life* but crowd in and nestle together comfortably in the center. The flying knives are reduced in number. Foxes, who seem to exist in harmony with the wolves, swallow and spit out the knives. The foxes also emerge from the girl, staying in a fetal position. They come together in a single sphere that sprouts four large transparent wings that spread out from the center of the sphere, glowing with blue light, and carry it over the sea.

The knives drawn by Konoike move in and out of her. They are things that have emerged from inside her mind and moved in from outside it. There are innumerable knives inside us that living human beings cannot avoid, including anxiety, irritation, anger, hatred, worry, jealousy, and confusion. And there are innumerable knives that stick into society and other people. We are hurt by these knives, hurt other people in turn, and sometimes learn ways of dealing with problems by discarding, forgetting, and living with them or learning to accept and coexist with them. Still, no matter how hard we try to avoid them or get by in spite of them, old knives come back to us and new knives are continually being created.

Konoike's young girls seem to be in the process of being eaten by wolves or changing into wolves. Only their legs are visible. In some cases, it looks as if they are giving birth to the wolves. How viewers see them probably depends on their state of mind. There is something beautiful about these fierce, mature animals that have an inner purity like a young girl as well as a sly wisdom, agility, and a capacity for self-preservation.

In Conclusion

Back to *Sex and the City*. The characters Carrie and Miranda speak in hushed voices in a gynecologist's waiting room.

“43?”

“That’s my scary age.”

“Mine’s 45.”³⁶

In another episode two seasons later, Samantha, the oldest of the four leading characters, proclaims,

“I’m forty-fucking-five. I have nothing to hide. ... Yes, I need glasses and I am not ashamed.

I have a sexy young man who loves to fuck me and I’m fabulous.”³⁷

As far as I know, this is the first time a sexy female lead portrayed in a romantic comedy has been shown putting on glasses.³⁸ Soon gray hair, middle-age spread, and sore backs will also appear along with reading glasses as a normal thing in romantic comedies. Television reflects and follows reality.

Although I am a little older than Samantha, I feel the same: “So I’m 47. Do you have a problem with that? I don’t have anything to hide. ... Yes, I wear glasses and I am not ashamed.” Although I have reached the age that many women consider “scary,” I am certainly not afraid. In fact, I am surprised to find that nothing much has changed. I thought that when I reached a certain age, I would attain a state of enlightenment and resignation or change my view of the world. However, although I may be better at dealing with my troubles than when I was younger, and the nature of my troubles may have changed a little, I still get just as upset, angry, and excited, and have dreams just like I did when I was in my twenties and thirties. I have a feeling that I will not change very much as I go through my fifties, sixties, and higher. I am far from reaching enlightenment or becoming resigned to my fate.

Women’s conditions and consciousness are changing.

The works presented in this exhibition were created to reflect this reality. They reexamine the relationships that women have with themselves and other factors around them. Many changes are taking place in the way women relate to the modern family system, the employment system, the community, other people, and history. How should we place ourselves in relation to the world? Women artists observe the everyday life around them on a personal scale. They explore and work to reconstruct the society that surrounds them, the history that has formed them, and the world where they live, but they have learned to question many things that have previously been overlooked and considered normal. They empathize with the world from the perspective of everyday life and their immediate surroundings, and their artworks, like life itself, overflow with “Love and Solitude, and Laughter.”

In contemporary Japan, the existing systems have reached an impasse and dark clouds are gathering. That is why these forms of expression have arisen and are increasing in importance. Under the suffocating conditions of the present, we are forced to ask how we can continue striving and keeping up our morale. This question is relevant to everyone who lives in the contemporary world, not just this group of artists. The extraordinary works of art derived from the environment of everyday life in “Love and Solitude, and Laughter” raise urgent issues that we must continue to confront. That is the purpose of this exhibition.

Notes

- 1 *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, Universal Pictures and Studio Canal, directed by Sharon Maguire, based on the novel by Helen Fielding, screenplay by Helen Fielding, Andrew Davis, Richard Curtis, 2002, 97 min.
- 2 Helen Fielding’s book, first serialized in the British newspaper, *The Independent*, has been translated and published in 23 countries and read by approximately 5 million people. In Japan, it set an incredible record for a translated book, selling some 300,000 copies. The Japanese version, *Burijitto Jonzu nikki*, was translated into Japanese by Yoshiko Kamei and published by Sony Magazines in 1998.
- 3 Astrid Henry, “Orgasms and Self-Empowerment: Sex and the City and the Third Wave Feminism,” in Kim Akass and Janet McCabe, ed., *Reading Sex and the City*, I.B. Tauris & Co., Ltd., 2004, pp. 75, 76.
- 4 “The Agony and the ‘Ex’-tacy,” *Sex and the City*, Season Four-1, Home Box Office, Inc., directed and written by Michael Patrick King, 2001.
- 5 Ogura Chikako, *Kekkon no Joken*, Asahi Shimbunsha, 2003, p. 173.
- 6 Ueno Chizuko and Cho Han Haejoang, *Kotoba wa todoku ka Kannichi feminisuto ofuku shokan* (Can words reach? Correspondence between Korean and Japanese feminists), translation by Sasaki Noriko and Kim Chonho, Iwanami Shoten, 2004, p. 176.

- 7 Ann Rosalind Jones, "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of Feminine Ecriture," Elaine Showalter ed., *New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1985, p. 5.
- 8 For more details, see Kasahara, *Nudo no poritikusu josei shashinka no shigoto* (Politics Behind the nude: The work of women photographers), Chikuma Shobo, 1998.
- 9 *Watashi no ai suru otoko wa watashi no naka de shasei suru. Seieki ga karada no naka ni nagarete iku. Itsumo, kono shunkan, ichiban ikiteiru noda to omou* (My lover shoots his load inside me. The sperm flows in my body. It is this moment when I feel most alive.), exhibition leaflet, n.p., 2004.
- 10 Kokatsu Reiko, "Meiso suru bijutsu – bijutsu wa imi wo kaifuku suru ka" (Meditating art: Can the meaning of art be recovered?), Meditation – *Mahiru no meiso, 90 nendai no Nihon bijutsu* (Noontime meditation – Contemporary Japanese Art having inner sight), exhibition catalogue, The Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, 1999, p. 13. Also, see Hirano Itaru, "Chiheisen no hikari" Ikemura Leiko no kinsaku ni tsuite" ("Light on the horizon" Uncovering the essence of life beyond discursive thought, The recent works of Ikemura Leiko), *Chiheisen wo koete* (Beyond the Horizon), exhibition catalogue, Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, 2000, pp. 82–6.
- 11 Tsurumi Akihiko, "Ikemura Leiko Uchi naru me ni utsuru 'hitotsu no e'" (Ikemura Leiko: A painting reflected in the inner eye), *Bijutsu Techo*, June 2004 (vol. 56, no. 850), p. 150.
- 12 Ueno Chizuko and Nobuta Sayoko, *Kekkon teikoku onna no wakaremichi* (Empire of marriage: A fork in the road for women), Kodansha, 2004, pp. 214, 215.
- 13 Watabiki Nobuko, "Hito to Yama to Omoshi" (People and mountains and weights), *Acrylart*, special edition, 1998, p. 96.
- 14 Watabiki Nobuko, "Watashi to narabu mono" (Those who stand next to me), *Watabiki Noriko ten, Koe yori mo chikaku* (Watabiki Noriko Exhibition: Closer than the voice), exhibition leaflet, Temporary Space 004, Sapporo, n.p.
- 15 Okada Hiroko, *Singin' in the Pain*, DVD, 7 min., 2004.
- 16 Saito Manabu, *Kazoku to iu na no kodoku* (The solitude known as the family), Kodansha +α Bunko, Kodansha, 2000, pp. 5, 6.
- 17 *The Hours*, Miramax International and Paramount Pictures, directed by Stephan Daldry, based upon the novel by Michael Cunningham, screenplay by David Hare, produced by Scott Rudin, Robert Fox, 115 min., 2002.
- 18 Chino Kaori, "Anata e no purezento – Idemitsu Mako san no sakuhin" (A present for you: The Idemitsu Mako Artwork Exhibition Project), *Idemitsu Mako sakuhinten purojekuto Watashi ga tsukuru. Watashi wo tsukuru* (I Create – I Create Myself, Idemitsu Mako Exhibition), exhibition catalogue, Committee for the Idemitsu Mako Exhibition, 2000, p. 7.
- 19 Idemitsu Mako, *Howatto a uman me; do – aru eizo sakka no jiden* (What a woman made: Autobiography of a video artist), Iwanami Shoten, 2003, p. 56.
- 20 Idemitsu Mako's *The Past Ahead* (2004) and Shimada Yoshiko's *Family Secrets – bones in a Tansu* (2004) were previously shown in an exhibition called "Borderline Cases" (ART, Ebisu, June 26–July 17, 2004). They were reworked and redesigned to fit the space of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo. "Borderline Cases" was jointly organized by Japanese and Korean women artists under the sponsorship of FAAB (Feminist Action Art Brigade).
- 21 Idemitsu Mako, op. cit., p. 210.
- 22 Ibid., p. 118.
- 23 Wakakuwa Midori, *Senso ga tsukuru joseizo* (The image of women created by war), Chikuma Shobo, 1995, p. 25.

- 24 Kokatsu Reiko, "'Intoreransu' no jidai ni, tagai ni oto suru – 'Borderline Cases Kyokalsenjo no onnatachi he' wo chushin ni" (Mutual response in an age of *intolerance* – focusing on "borderline cases"), *Aida* (no. 104), 2004, pp. 2–14.
- 25 Kano Mikiyo, "Onna no senryo'to 'kaiho'" (The occupation and liberation of women), *Gendai Shiso*, June 2004 (vol. 7, no. 32), p. 74.
- 26 BuBu and Shimada Yoshiko, "Made in Occupied Japan," Fran Lloyd, ed., *Consuming Bodies, Sex, and Contemporary Japanese Art*, Reaktion Books, 2002, pp. 107–26.
- 27 Takemura Kazuko, "Zadankai, 'posuto' feminizumu riron wa nani wo kirihiraku no ka? – 'posuto' feminizumu no genzaisei akuchuariti" (Conversation, what is opened by "post"-feminist theory? The actuality of "post"-feminism), Takemura Kazuko, ed., *"Post"-Feminism*, 2003, p. 48.
- 28 Maruyama Shigeru, "Toron Shinmitsuken no seijigaku" (Discussion, the politics of intimacy), Takemura Kazuko, ed., *"Post"-Feminism*, Sakuhinsha, 2003, p. 163.
- 29 Ogura Chikako, op. cit., p. 70.
- 30 "'Ai to warai' ga sakuhin no tema. Massugu kokoro ni todoku, katayaburi na ato" ("Love and laughter" is the theme of the work. Unconventional art that goes straight to the heart), *Gekkan Shushu Kansai*, May 2004 (vol. 7-5, no. 118), p. 78.
- 31 Matsuda Tetsuo, *Insatsu ni koi shite*, Shobunsha, 2002, p. 26.
- 32 Ibid., p. 24.
- 33 Onodera Yuki, "*transvest*" – *gitai, sukitoru boryumu, sekai no utsushi, chiisana ha sokkuri ni moho suru konchu no yo ni* ("transvest" – camouflage, transparent volume, copy of the world, like an insect that exactly imitates a small leaf), www.chukyo-u.ac.jp/c-square, 2003.
- 34 Dana Friis-Hansen, "Yuki Onodera: On the Surface of Darkness," *transvest, yuki onodera*, Nazraeli Press Inc., 2004, n.p.
- 35 Yamashita Yuji, "Joshiki ni kurumareta kyoki – Konoike Tomoko no hyogen ni tsuite" (Madness wrapped up in common sense – on the expression of Konoike Tomoko), *Horror Dragonia Geppo IV*, p. 2.
- 36 "Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda," *Sex and the City*, Season Four-11, Home Box Office, Inc., written by Jenny Bicks, directed by David Frankel, 2001.
- 37 "One," *Sex and the City*, Season Six-12, Home Box Office, Inc., written by Michael Patrick King, directed by David Frankel, 2003.
- 38 In *Something's Gotta Give* (2003), an American film directed by Nancy Meyers, there is an episode where Diane Keaton and Jack Nicholson mistakenly use each other's reading glasses. However, the main female character is a playwright who has been married and divorced and has a grown daughter, so this is not actually an exception to my statement.

