

groups: prostitutes, for whom health check-ups became obligatory, and pupils who were to be examined regularly by school medical officers.

These views and measures were by no means unique to Japan. In Europe and North America similar opinions were expressed well into the nineteenth century. Japanese sexologists accepted both western sexological thinking as well as European sexual culture as superior and more advanced; and they did so very much in line with their colleagues in various other disciplines in Japan at the time. They utilized this assumption for publicizing their new field and establishing themselves as experts on the knowledge of sex, thus significantly contributing to discourses on public health, social order and the building of Japan.

### **Session 175: scopic Topographies of Japanese Modernity: Crossings between Visuality and Gender, National Identity, and Colonialism**

Organizer and Chair: *Elaine T. Gerbert*, University of Kansas  
Discussant: *Livia Monnet*, University of Montreal

The past decade has seen a proliferation of writings on vision and visuality covering a vast spectrum of topics, ranging from the history of seeing, the theorization of spectatorship, the visualization of texts, and discourses on electronic technologies and computerized vision, to the "teletopological space time of visual representations" (Burgin).

The cultural, social impact of modern optical technology was especially conspicuous in Japan from around 1915 onward and was linked to the emergence of a new, modernist sensibility. Amateur photography, stereoscopes, motion pictures, home movies, exhibition halls, and modern showcases and advertising led to quantitative and qualitative shifts in who and what was represented and how the presented was related to looking. New ways of seeing were implicated in new ways of thinking about identity.

The papers on this panel explore the dynamics of ethnic, national, and gender identity from the perspective of "seeing." Shigemi Inaga examines how Yanagi Soetsu unwittingly assumed the "orientalist gaze" of the colonizing Westerner as he made visible Korean culture within the Japanese colonial empire through the retrieval and exhibit of Korean folk art. Dennis Washburn analyzes the ideological basis of Yokomitsu Riichi's spectacle-oriented aesthetic practice as revealed in his 1939 novel *Shanghai*, in which Western modernity is fused with an Asian identity. Nina Cornyetz takes up the idea of a "gendered essence" created through the evocation of

the visual in Izumi Kyoka's 1917 novel and Bando Tamasaburo's 1995 revisualization of Izumi's essence of "woman." We hope that these papers and the discussion that follows will open up new areas of inquiry in the research on visual-verbal relations and contribute to the mapping of the "scopic fault-lines" of Japanese modernity.

### **Reconsidering the Mingei Undo as a Colonial Discourse: The Politics of Visualizing Asian "Popular Art"**

*Shigemi Inaga*, International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto

Yanagi Soetsu (1889–1961), founder of the Mingei Undo or Popular Art Movement in Japan, owes his discovery of the "immaculate beauty of everyday ware made by unknown craftsmen" to Korea under Japanese occupation. Yanagi attempted to preserve and promote this Korean Popular Art by organizing exhibitions, collecting remaining wares and founding the Korean Popular Art Museum in Seoul. Through these efforts, Yanagi succeeded in literally "visualizing" the "popular art" which had remained invisible and unrecognized as such until then. Further, Yanagi applied this strategy not only to Korean but also to other Asian cultures, including Japan. His politics of visualization of Popular Art contributed to rehabilitate the repressed Asiatic cultural identity under the overwhelming impact of Western imperialism and Western culture.

Still, the fact remains that such a rehabilitation was not possible without Japan's colonization of the Korean Peninsula. Just as the Europeans recommended to the Japanese to preserve their traditional art, Yanagi encouraged the Korean people to liberate themselves from Japanese "modern" art education. In this double concentric structure of subordination lies an interiorized "orientalist gaze" unconsciously imbedded in Yanagi's Mingei ideology.

As a manifestation of East Asian Modernity, the Popular Art Movement, as a discourse, visualized its anti-modernist undercurrent. The invention of tradition, it implies, must be reexamined by analyzing the tactics of "visualization" the Mingei Undo enacted through its development as a private institution under the Japanese colonial Empire.

### **Shanghai through Colonial Eyes: Yokomitsu's Search for an Asian Modernity**

*Dennis Washburn*, Dartmouth College

Yokomitsu Riichi's aesthetics were motivated by a desire to create a modernism that was genuinely Asian, and in that desire he shared the aspirations of many others in his literary generation. What Yokomitsu longed for was a culture that was truly modern by virtue of its being universal—a culture that would