

Teaching Geisha in History, Fiction, and Fantasy

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The Intellectual Appeal of Geisha Studies

Artists skilled in performing classical music and dance, geisha are famous the world over as emblems of Japanese culture at its most erotic and exotic. Everything from novels and comedies to fashion and films document Euro-American fascination with geisha from the late 19th through the 20th centuries. Japanese essayists have long, and often ruefully, observed this foreign curiosity for the *geisha gaaru*. Yet, the literature on geisha in Japan includes a range of works, too, including fiction, academic study, tips for would-be connoisseurs as well as memoirs and etiquette manuals penned by geisha themselves. Well into the twenty-first century, geisha still intrigue at home and abroad. Exploring multiple representations of geisha in an Asian Studies course easily engages students, but also challenges them to think critically. Not only do they learn about geisha past and present, but they also understand geisha studies as a field. Their study also explores the constructed nature of gender, leading to comparisons of Japan, the U.S., and a host of models of ideal femininity and masculinity. It is students' involvement with learning how knowledge is produced, fantasies sustained, and questions asked and avoided, that makes teaching the geisha course rewarding.

My own engagement with geisha studies began ten years ago when I began teaching a unit on geisha in "The American Life of Japanese Women," a first-year seminar that examined representations of Japanese women in U.S. popular culture.¹ Many students had already read one of our main texts, Arthur Golden's 1997 best-selling novel, *Memoirs of a Geisha*.² Discussion of American fantasies about geisha proved so lively that I decided to create another first-year seminar on "Geisha

in History, Fiction, and Fantasy.” Fortunately, excellent academic studies and translations of Japanese work have appeared in the past ten years that expand our understanding of geisha, enabling me to make a fuller syllabus for this course.³ Eventually, I changed the class from a first-year seminar of twenty students to an introductory college course open to more students but generally limited to thirty-five. The more I taught this class, the more I enjoyed research in geisha studies myself, an interest that led me to scout additional materials in English and Japanese. The course topic consistently generates controversy in class as students debate the politics of tourism, femininity training, geisha performances that cross the boundaries of gender and race, and the complicated pleasures and perils of orientalism. The focus on geisha can easily lead into field trips and hands-on activities such as visits to a local museum to view Edo woodblock prints, a demonstration of the tea ceremony or kimono dressing, and a workshop in Japanese flower arranging. In this short article, I describe a few key units and texts in the course and, in conclusion, discuss its main aim, which is guiding students’ original research and their analysis of geisha studies as a field. I give specific details about the sources for these units in the notes.

The four most compelling topics to take up in a class on geisha are: 1) the working lives of contemporary geisha; 2) the inception and development of the profession in the Tokugawa period (1600-1868); 3) the harsh working conditions endured by girls and women in pre-war modern Japan; and 4) representations of the geisha emanating from Euro-American writers and artists that have had a global impact. These issues could also be explored in abbreviated form as a single unit in a more broadly focused class in Japanese literature, theater, or history and in women’s studies courses.

Geisha in Contemporary Japan

What is a geisha? By the end of the course, students are able to give a multifaceted response to this question, distinguishing definitions of geisha by historical period and primary texts. We begin, however, by talking about the

contemporary profession and delving into the working lives of the nearly 200 geisha and 100 geisha apprentices (*maiko*) active in Kyoto. Although practicing geisha can be found in other parts of Japan, much of the information available concentrates on the five geisha districts (*hanamachi*) of Kyoto. A focus on the ancient capital also leads well into the topic of tourism and the nostalgic desire expressed by many Japanese and foreign visitors to experience a romantic, old Japan. Important objectives in this initial unit are guiding students to becoming familiar with the basic Japanese vocabulary associated with geisha and to understand the hierarchy, customs, and etiquette that structure relations among geisha and between geisha and others. Students also learn about the geisha's commitment to becoming accomplished performers of classical Japanese dance and music. They examine the relationship between the income geisha earn from performing at frequent parties (*ozashiki*) to the high cost of their almost daily art lessons and lavish public performances.

This unit also responds to the current revival of interest in Japan in the geisha apprentice and the increase in teenagers choosing to move to Kyoto to become *maiko*.⁴ We cover the steps a young woman takes to become a geisha: learning to wear the kimono daily; caring for an elaborate hairstyle; speaking in a *hanamachi* dialect; undergoing rigorous arts training; discovering how to converse with clients; and projecting the image of a Kyoto *maiko* at all times. Since students realize that they are relatively close in age to the apprentice and many admit to a similar fascination with this arcane, highly costumed and disciplined lifestyle, spending time on the *maiko*'s training captures student interest at the outset of the course. A discussion of geisha and *maiko* training and lifestyle also opens up a conversation on femininity training. We observe how the rigors of tradition and hierarchy discipline the excessive display of heightened beauty, expensive, elaborate dress, and public visibility. We ask how the transformation of an ordinary teen into a *maiko*, for example, compares to the "makeover," a Cinderella-like experience heavily promoted in both Japan and the U.S. in magazines, cosmetics campaigns, and films. I should

note here that although the class generally enrolls more women than men, the topic of femininity training and makeovers generates vibrant responses from most students. Most have seen TV programs such as TLC's "What Not to Wear," for example, and are keen to discuss the implications of self-improvement messages and twenty-first century rhetoric about the possibility of transforming the body, whether to achieve the look of a maiko or the successful candidate at a job interview.

Several texts work well for this introductory unit on contemporary geisha. If one can order only one book, I would recommend choosing Liza Dalby's *Geisha* (1983), now available with a new preface for the 25th anniversary edition.⁵ The book describes her anthropological field research as a geisha in the mid-1970s and offers an excellent view of geisha history and arts. Dalby has created a beautiful website with more graphics, information about geisha, and answers to frequent questions from readers.⁶ Additionally, students always enjoy reading "Bad Girls Confined," a concise essay by ethnomusicologist Kelly M. Foreman that expertly delineates the geisha today, provides a brief overview of geisha history, and discusses perceptions of geisha in Japan and abroad.⁷ Most interestingly, Foreman observes how postwar Japanese have admired geisha arts but looked askance at these women who choose to remain single and devoted to the arts over finding their purpose in life through becoming wives and mothers. Students or instructors who seek more information on the geisha as artists should consult Foreman's book, *The Gei of Geisha: Music, Identity and Meaning* (2008), which offers an excellent in-depth analysis of performance structure, the geisha's relationship to arts masters, and contemporary patronage.⁸ For more on maiko, students can consult *A Geisha's Journey: My Life as a Kyoto Apprentice* (2008). A pictorial book intended for a popular audience, *A Geisha's Journey* describes in photographs and personal narrative the arduous apprenticeship that led one young woman to her debut as a full-fledged geisha.⁹ Students can read this book on reserve in the college library; alternatively, a pair can be assigned to present the book to the class.

Showing excerpts from various documentaries on geisha can be useful for teaching about geisha dance and costume, and for showing how tourists may be enthralled with the teahouse culture of Kyoto.¹⁰ One of my favorite films to introduce in this unit, however, is a Japanese film that pokes fun at one man's obsession with maiko. *Maiko Haaaaan!!!* (*Miiiss Maiko*, 2007) takes a playful look at the geisha institution and Kyoto as the site of old Japan.¹¹ It makes fun of everything associated with geisha from pouting maiko to snooty teahouse managers and takes a satiric view of the Kyoto fieldtrip experienced by most students in Japan. The film offers a refreshing change from the reverential tone of the documentaries and their frequent images of deadly serious monks and arts masters. The comedy also shows how many Japanese can approach "old Kyoto" with a sense of humor, and encourages the students to maintain some critical distance as well. One can extend this line of analysis by assigning articles related to tourism, orientalism fashioned in Japan, and Kyoto nostalgia by anthropologists Millie Creighton and Dorinne Kondo.¹² Again, on the playful side, students can read Aimee Major Steinberger's manga *Japan Ai: A Tall Girl's Adventures in Japan* about a six-foot tall American girl's travel to Japan and how she adored the *cos-play* experience of becoming a maiko for a few hours.¹³ Talking about the tourist experience as, in part, the chance to try on new identities and experience a sense of the exotic leads into discussion of the fables of the Edo pleasure quarters.

The Pleasure Quarters in Tokugawa Japan (1600-1868)

Learning about the pleasure quarters established in the Tokugawa period introduces students to some of Japan's most colorful arts—the Kabuki Theater, Bunraku Puppet Theater, the woodblock prints of geisha, sardonic stories about visits to the pleasure quarters, and sumptuous costumes. One can link the 1629 law banning women from the public stage, a measure taken by the government to quell unruly audiences, to female performers needing to find other venues for performance. The figure of the geisha as a simply dressed female musician who

played the samisen for small audiences dates from this era. The chapter, “Rise of the Geisha: An Age of Glitter and Tragedy” in Cecilia Segawa Seigle’s *Yoshiwara: The Glittering World of the Japanese Courtesan* (1993) provides an in-depth view of this stage in geisha history.¹⁴ Students consider the geisha as a figure in Tokugawa popular culture by reading strikingly different kinds of literature. They gain a comic view of the pleasure quarters by reading the short, funny tales of the would-be dandy and consider the Edo-era ideals of masculinity.¹⁵ The famous Bunraku play *Love Suicide at Amijima*, however, presents the geisha and her lover as tragic figures.¹⁶ A recent Japanese film, *Sakuran* (2006) plays up the delightful, colorful aspects of the “floating world” of the pleasure quarters while depicting even the high-class courtesan’s life as a hard one with little chance for escape.¹⁷ Graphic sex scenes in *Sakuran*, in some of the Edo woodblock prints and pleasure quarters fiction may not be appropriate for all classrooms. Because the topic of geisha, aesthetic codes, and arts of the Tokugawa period is worthy of class in itself, it is difficult to give more than an introduction in this course although, many students enjoy choosing some aspect of this unit for their research projects.

Geisha on the Margins: Labor Law, Prostitution, and Protest

When studying the broad history of geisha, it is important to remember that thousands of girls and women, also called geisha, labored under cruel working conditions and had little control over their lives or bodies. Early 20th century geisha life on the margins has been captured by former geisha Masuda Sayo (1925-2008) in her *Autobiography of a Geisha*, translated by G.G. Rowley (2003).¹⁸ As a young girl, Masuda worked as a *komori*, a caregiver for children, before being sold to a rural geisha house where she worked as a maid while being trained in music and dance. She did not even know that she had a first name until a broken leg landed her in the hospital. Masuda describes the violent abuse and enforced prostitution that she and others suffered. She also shows how difficult it was to make a living after giving up her work as a geisha and how

fellow factory workers, for example, would look down on her once they knew her background. Despite the tragedies she endures, Masuda remains a resilient, optimistic person.

The idea of a geisha as an impoverished girl at the mercy of manipulative geisha mothers and rich, exploitive patrons comes across strongly, too, in the films of director Mizoguchi Kenji. His silent 1929 film, *Tokyo March* (*Tokyo kōshinkyoku*, now subtitled in English), for example, describes the painful life of a young woman forced into the geisha life when her uncle loses his job.¹⁹ In the 1950s as the number of girls graduating from high school and college rose and the expansion of women's rights became a much discussed topic, films such as Mizoguchi's *A Geisha* (*Gion Matsuri*, 1953) and Naruse Mikio's *Flowing* (*Nagareru*, 1956) depicted the geisha as a symbol of the persistence of patriarchal privilege in postwar Japan.²⁰ To expand this topic further, one can assign "Poverty and Prostitution," in Mikiso Hane's book, *Peasants, Rebels, Women and Outcasts: The Underside of Modern Japan* (1982).²¹

This unit leads into discussion of human trafficking and sex tourism today. The experience of girls like Masuda is not only a horrific tale of the past, but the reality of all too many children in the U.S. and around the globe. The last time I taught the geisha course, I was fortunate to have the Director of the Carolina Women's Center give a presentation on trafficking to and within the U.S. Not only did this moment raise awareness about trafficking today, but it also functioned to work against the idea that Japan alone has been the site of this problem. This unit also led to continued conversations about tourism, orientalism, and the quest for the exotic other as we read Vera's Mackie's article, "The Metropolitan Gaze: Travellers, Bodies, and Spaces."²²

Some students pursued this aspect of the course in their research projects, investigating the wartime enslavement of the so-called "comfort women" by the Japanese Imperial Army, the sexual labor of the Japanese girls and women sent abroad as *kara-yuki* (to China) and *ame-yuki* (to North America), and the fight against human trafficking.

Geisha Fascination Abroad

The issue of orientalist fantasy in the Euro-American West arises when the class turns to the many fanciful images of geisha in the 19th and 20th century evident in plays, novels, and visual culture created outside Japan. Students are often surprised by how many of these involve some form of comic cross-dressing that points to anxieties about sexuality, gender, and race in the West. Sidney Jones' operetta, *The Geisha, Story of a Teahouse*, first produced in London in 1895, offers one case of this.²³ *The Geisha* involves an English girl, who impersonates a geisha to win back her sweetheart, only to find herself betrothed to a Japanese lord. (A relatively short script, *The Geisha* is fun to perform in class by assigning students to read various parts). In the early 1950s, *Teahouse of the August Moon*, a novel adapted to stage and then screen, won major awards; the film featured the siren geisha character Lotus Blossom and depicted Okinawan women demanding lessons in how to become geisha from hapless U.S. occupying forces.²⁴ Actresses Shirley MacLaine and Lucille Ball disguised themselves as geisha to comic effect in film and TV as well.²⁵ In the cases of the Anglo impersonations, there is an unmistakable humor implied by the actresses "playing down" by costuming as a courtesan and as Asians, and an equally implicit admiration of their acting ability as the audience observes how well the actresses manage to pass for Japanese, at least in the eyes of their husbands, who are too taken at being in the presence of geisha to see clearly. Such impersonations raise the question of cross-race performance and the history of "yellow face" in American popular culture. To push the conversation beyond the Anglo and Asian binary, introducing the striking images of black geisha in the paintings of African American artist Iona Rozeal Brown works well to prompt new questions. Several of Brown's paintings are available in an online gallery.²⁶ Are the paintings about Japanese women imagining themselves as black, African American women fantasizing about themselves as a geisha, or is there a new hybrid created?

As the most famous of all recent books on geisha, Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* never fails to ignite class debate on representations of geisha abroad. Even though *Memoirs* is a long novel (448 pages), students find this tale of a girl's rise from poverty to geisha glamour a relatively fast and easy read. When I first began teaching this novel in the late 1990s, most students had already read this best-seller and signed up for the geisha class because of it. Although the students' enthusiasm for *Memoirs* made for lively discussion, we needed a way to achieve some distance. Using the hundreds of reader responses on amazon.com proved an effective way to move discussion ahead. I divided students into small groups, giving each group a different sheaf of reader responses, and asked them to characterize the various reactions to the book. They had to detect the most common responses and find a few to read to the class to give a good idea of the range of comments. This exercise helped the students reflect on their own reading of the novel and led to conversation on how many readers enjoyed "losing" themselves in the world of the geisha and how impressed they were that an American man had crafted such a believable story. This point opened conversation on readers' admiration for Golden's talents in creating the geisha as, in a sense, another instance of cross-dressing. Taking up the controversy arising in 2005 in China, Japan, and the U.S. over the Chinese actress playing geisha in the movie further complicated this discussion of cross-dressing.²⁷ Students debated questions of representation, asking how the geisha's image had changed when staged by onnagata, English operetta stars, Brown's paintings, and the *Memoirs* actresses.

Criticism of *Memoirs of a Geisha* fuels more debate, pushing the class to think in still other ways about geisha and the politics of representation. Asian American satire and short scholarly articles work well here. MAD-TV comedian Bobby Lee's spoof on the movie trailer of *Memoirs* through his own Sayuri impersonation is available on YouTube. Lee makes fun of the film's creation of the "exotic oriental beauty" by making himself over as a clumsy, homely geisha. San Francisco-based

guerrilla artist Scott Tsuchitani protested against what he saw as the American fetishization of geisha displayed in a major art exhibit in 2004 by pasting a comic self-portrait around the city. This poster depicts the artist as a nerdy geisha who wears thick, dark-rimmed glasses; the subtitle read, “Orientalist Dream Come True: GEISHA: Perpetuating the Fetish.”²⁸ Such satire makes the Asian American man as the cross-dressed character, calling into question how fascination with geisha shapes notions of his masculinity. In a somewhat different vein, anthropologist Anne Allison’s review of the novel in *Education about Asia* points out the authenticating strategies Golden uses in creating his geisha world and suggests questions that consider aspects of the narrative in terms of its phenomenal reception in the U.S.²⁹ “Innocence to Deviance: The Fetishisation of Japanese Women in Western Fiction, 1890s-1990s” Narrelle Morris’ 2002 article in the online journal *Intersections* is useful for placing *Memoirs* within a history of orientalist writing on Japanese women.³⁰ Some students decide to work on a related topic for their research paper, choosing to compare *Memoirs* to Japanese men’s novels featuring geisha such as Kawabata Yasunari’s *Snow Country* (*Yukiguni*, 1952) and Nagai Kafk’s *Geisha in Rivalry* (*Udekurabe*, 1918), while others opt to explore *Geisha, A Life*, the 2003 memoir penned by Golden’s alleged informant, former geisha Iwasaki Mineko.³¹

Guiding Student Research in Geisha Studies

By the end of this course, I want my students to understand how the field of geisha studies has been shaped, the kinds of questions that have been asked, and to contribute their own research and analysis. Choosing a research topic, writing a ten-page paper, and giving a ten-minute class presentation on the paper are the students’ major assignments.

Student’s research topics have ranged from those closely connected to geisha arts such as kimono, samisen music, flower arrangement, traditional Japanese dance, or fiction, plays, and film about geisha produced either in Japan or abroad. Students have also chosen to work comparatively by looking at Miss America or Playboy Bunnies as gendered representatives of

national culture, at Las Vegas as an American pleasure quarter, and the sorority as a source of sisterhood and femininity training. I provide a list of suggested topics, examples of excellent past projects for students to see, and a grading rubric that identifies the most important aspects of the assignment.

Taking the students step-by-step through drafting the research paper has proven effective. Once students have chosen a topic, formulating the research question becomes their major challenge. Devoting class time to brainstorming about possible research questions gives some example of how to do this. I ask the students to be explicit about their theoretical perspective. Which of the critical essays that we used in class offers a useful approach to their own research? What passages will they cite? As the time approaches for students to write a first draft, we review how to express and develop the paper; ways to make transitions; and lastly, talk about the uses of the conclusion.

Finally, in many iterations of this class, I have concluded with an oral final exam of ninety minutes. Students are divided into groups of three or four and eight broad discussion questions are posted for them one week before the exam. I grade students on their ability to synthesize issues and to support their claims with specific references to texts, field trips, visual materials, and student presentations. When the oral exam works well, time flies by and the conversation produces new ideas that speak to how much individual students have learned about geisha and geisha studies. I feel the course has succeeded when the most long and involved discussion and even debate at the oral exam turns on the question, "What is a geisha?" This shows that students have not only learned, but are actively participating in shaping new knowledge.

Endnotes

¹ The syllabi and schedules for versions of "The American Life of Japanese Women" and "Geisha in History, Fiction, and Fantasy" are online at <http://www.unc.edu/~bardsley/>

² Arthur Golden, *Memoirs of a Geisha* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997).

- ³ I give an overview of academic studies of geisha and recent Japanese publications in a review essay available online: “Liza Dalby’s *Geisha: The View Twenty-five Years Later*.” *Southeast Review of Asian Studies*, Vol. 31 (2009): 309-323. This retrospective review essay also describes the usefulness of *Geisha* as classroom text useful for interrogating performances of race, gender, and nation. An excellent list of resources for teaching about geisha compiled by Roger Sensenbaugh is available online on the website for SPICE (Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education) at <http://spice.stanford.edu/docs/179>. See also Pradt, Sarah J. and Kawashima, Terry “Teaching the ‘Geisha’ as Cultural Criticism,” *Education about Asia*, vol.6, no. 1 (2001): 26-31.
- ⁴ For information on the many forms this new interest in the maiko is taking in Japan, see Jan Bardsley, “The Maiko Boom: The Revival of Kyoto’s Novice Geisha,” *Japan Studies Review*, forthcoming in 2010 online at <http://asian.fiu.edu/>
- ⁵ Liza Dalby. *Geisha*. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1983). 25th Anniversary Edition, Updated with a New Preface.
- ⁶ <http://www.lizadalby.com/LD/welcome.html>
- ⁷ Kelly Foreman, “Bad Girls Confined: Okuni, Geisha, and the Negotiation of Female Performance Space,” in Laura Miller and Jan Bardsley, eds., *Bad Girls of Japan* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 32-47. See also Foreman’s chapter, “The Perfect Woman: Geisha, Etiquette, and the World of Japanese Traditional Arts” in Jan Bardsley and Laura Miller, eds., *Manners and Mischief: Gender and Power in Japanese Conduct Literature*, forthcoming from University of California Press.
- ⁸ Kelly M. Foreman, *The Gei of Geisha: Music, Identity and Meaning* (Burlington, VT; Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2008).
- ⁹ Naoyuki Ogino, *A Geisha’s Journey: My Life as a Kyoto Apprentice*, translated by Gearoid Reidy and Philip Price (Tokyo, New York, London: Kodansha International, 2008).

- ¹⁰ The documentary, *The Secret Life of Geisha* (directed by James M. Prater, distributed by A&E Home Video, 1999; 100 minutes), although problematic in several ways, has some useful historical footage of geisha performances. *Japanese Dance: Succession of a Kyōmai Master* (directed by Nobuyuki Oka, distributed by Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2000; 53 minutes) is effective for introducing students to the kind of dance practiced by geisha in Kyoto and to the philosophy and hierarchy of the traditional arts world.
- ¹¹ Mizuta Nobuo, director, *Maiko Haaaan!!! (Miiiss Maiko)* distributed by VIZ Pictures, 2007.
- ¹² Mille R. Creighton, "The *Depāto*: Merchandizing the West While Selling Japaneseness," in Joseph J. Tobin, ed., *Re-Made in Japan: Everyday Life and Consumer Taste in a Changing Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 42-57; Dorinne Kondo, "Orientalizing: Fashioning Japan," in *About Face: Performing Race in Fashion & Theater* (London: Routledge, 1997), 55-103.
- ¹³ Aimee Major Steinberger, *Japan Ai: A Tall Girl's Adventures in Japan* (Agoura Hills, CA: Go!Comi, 2007). The author is currently writing a book on cos-play, a popular phenomenon in Japan, the U.S., and other parts of the globe in which fans dress up as their favorite characters from manga and anime.
- ¹⁴ Cecilia Segawa Seigle, *Yoshiwara: The Glittering World of the Japanese Courtesan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), 169-203.
- ¹⁵ See James T. Araki, "Sharebon: Books for Men of Mode" *Monumenta Nipponica*, 24: 1/2 (1969): 31-45; "Age of the Dandy: The Flowering of Yoshiwara Arts," in Seigle, *Yoshiwara*, 129-168.
- ¹⁶ Chikamatsu Monzaemon, *The Love Suicide at Amijima* (Shinjūten no Amijima) in Chikamatsu, Monzaemon, and Donald Keene, *Four Major Plays of Chikamatsu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 170-208.
- ¹⁷ Ninagawa Mika, director, *Sakuran*, distributed by Asmik Ace Entertainment, 2007.

- ¹⁸ Masuda Sayo, *Autobiography of a Geisha*, Translated by G.G. Rowley (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).
- ¹⁹ Mizoguchi Kenji, director, *Tōkyō kōshinkyoku* (Tokyo March, 1929), distributed by Seisaku chosaku Kabushiki Kaisha Matsuda Eigasha : Sōhatsubaimoto Ōrudo Nyū, [2000?]
- ²⁰ Mizoguchi Kenji, director, *A Geisha (Gion Matsuri)*, distributed by Daiei Motion Picture Company, 1953; Naruse Mikio, director, *Flowing (Nagareru)*, distributed by Toho Pictures, 1956.
- ²¹ Hane, Mikiso. *Peasants, Rebels, Women, and Outcastes: The Underside of Modern Japan* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 206-225.
- ²² Vera Mackie, “The Metropolitan Gaze: Travellers, Bodies, and Spaces.” *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, Issue 4, (2000), online at <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue4/vera.html/>
- ²³ For an excellent essay on this play, see Yorimitsu Hashimoto, “Japanese Tea Party: Representations of Victorian Paradise and Playground in *Geisha* (1896),” pps. 104-124 in John K. Walton, ed., *Histories of Tourism : Representation, Identity, and Conflict* (Channel View Publications, 2005). The play is available online through Google Books.
- ²⁴ Vern Sneider, *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (New York: Putnam, 1951); Patrick, John, and Vern Sneider, *The Teahouse of the August Moon, a Play* (New York: Putnam, 1952); David Mann directed the film adaptation in 1956, which is distributed by MGM/UA Home Video.
- ²⁵ For analysis of Shirley MacLaine’s 1962 film, *My Geisha*, (directed by Jack Cardiff, distributed by Paramount Home Video), see “The Return of the Butterfly” in Gina Marchetti, *Romance and the ‘Yellow Peril’ Race, Sex, and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 176-201; “The Dark Heart of Fantasy: Japanese Women in the Eyes of the Western Male” in Susan Napier, *From Impressionism to Anime: Japan as Fantasy and Fan Culture in the Mind of the West* (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 103-124; Naoko Shibuasawa,

- “Hollywood’s *Geisha*” in *America’s Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 255-287.
- ²⁶ View several of Iona Rozeal Brown’s paintings online the virtual gallery maintained by Spellman College at <http://www.spelman.edu/bush-hewlett/a3/>
- ²⁷ Rob Marshall, director, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, distributed by Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2005. The harshest criticism leveled against the film *Memoirs of a Geisha* has come from director Rob Marshall’s choice to cast three ethnically-Chinese actresses in the lead roles. He chose Zhang Ziyi, of *Hidden Dragon, Crouching Tiger* fame, as the protagonist Chiyo/Sayuri; then, Malaysian-born Michelle Yeoh, also of *Hidden Dragon*, to play the “good geisha” Mameha; and then, Gong Li, famous for *Raise the Red Lantern*, to play the “evil geisha,” Hatsumomo. China banned the film, claiming its citizens would be humiliated by seeing these stars playing Japanese “prostitutes.” Asian American actors such as Lucy Liu supported Marshall’s decision, arguing that demanding an Asian actor’s ethnicity had to match that of the character narrowed opportunities for Asian actors further than they already were. Chinese director Chen Kaige, however, believed the castings choices showed how little Hollywood understood differences among Asians. Several articles on the controversy can be found in online newspapers and blogs.
- ²⁸ Tsuchitani’s poster is actually a modification of the poster for the exhibit, also seen all over San Francisco in 2004, titled “*Geisha: Beyond the Painted Smile*.” The original poster is available at: <http://www.scotttsuchitani.com/pages/geisha/fantasy.html>
- ²⁹ Anne Allison, Review of *Memoirs of a Geisha, Education about Asia*, vol. 5, no. 2 (Fall 2000), 42-44. The same issue of *EAA* includes an article for teaching *Memoirs* in comparative perspective; see Nancy Traubitz, “*Suggestions for Comparing The Life of an Amorous Woman, Moll Flanders, and Memoirs of a Geisha*,” *Education about Asia*, vol. 5, no. 2 (Fall 2000), 33-39.

- ³⁰ Narrelle, Morris, “Innocence to Deviance: The Fetishisation of Japanese Women in Western Fiction, 1890s-1990s,” *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, Issue 7, March 2002, online at <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue7/morris.html>.
- ³¹ Kawabata Yasunari, *Snow Country* (Yukiguni, 1952) , Translated by Edward G. Seidensticker (New York: Knopf, 1969 [c1956, 1958]); Nagai Kafû, *Geisha Rivalry* (Udekurabe, 1918), Translated by Stephen Snyder (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). Iwasaki Mineko with Randee Brown, *Geisha, A Life* (New York: Washington Square, 2003). Charging that Golden had betrayed a promise not to reveal her identity, Iwasaki sued the author. The two ended up settling out of court and Iwasaki published her own memoir in English and Japanese.