

THE DISTANCE BETWEEN: REPRESENTATIONS OF NEW WOMANHOOD IN FRENCH
AND JAPANESE POSTERS

By

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To my father, mother, and brother

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At the end of the nineteenth century, a unique type of woman was emerging known as the New Woman. She was a female type seen all across Europe and even developed in Eastern countries like Japan. The New woman was known for being university educated, sexually independent, and self-aware and often held changing viewpoints of the roles of women within society. This thesis examines representations of the New Woman within French and Japanese posters. Both countries are connected through a series of artistic and social exchanges. This thesis is grounded in the three main questions: To what extent were aspects of New Womanhood and artistic styles exchanged between France and Japan in the later part of the 19th and the early 20th centuries?; Were these artistic and social changes one for one? and How did these exchanges contribute to the modernization of both France and Japan? While the extent of artistic influence between France and Japan is often characterized through the one-sided exchange of *japonisme*, I assert that artistic exchange was reciprocal between the two countries. Additionally, the development of the French New Woman significantly influenced Japanese women to form their own feminist groups, such as the *Seitoshu*, which in turn inspired images of Japanese women in modern ways through posters. While I posit that artistic exchange between France and Japan was reciprocal, the social exchange of New Womanhood from France to Japan was largely

one-sided. Both the artistic exchange of Japanese art in France and the Art Nouveau style in Japan, along with the modern social type of the New Woman being represented through these styles, allowed for both countries to display their own unique types of turn-of-the-century modernity.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

My demand for female “equality” simply means that I am convinced there will be no social peace until women are intellectually trained very much as men are...[the] state of things is traceable to the lack of education, in all senses of the word...I am driven frantic by the crass imbecility of the typical woman. That type must disappear, —or at all events become altogether subordinate. And I believe that the only way of effecting this is to go through a period of what many people will call sexual anarchy. Nothing good will perish; we can trust the forces of nature, which tend to conservation.

George Gissing¹
The Collected Letters of George Gissing: Volume Six

In an 1893 letter to his friend, German writer and philosopher Eduard Bertz, the novelist George Gissing wrote about the late nineteenth century—calling for a period of “sexual anarchy.” Commonly cited, Gissing used the phrase “sexual anarchy” to mean the breaking down of dominant ideologies on sex and gender to allow for a more equal society. Just as the terms suggest, Gissing was describing an all-out chaos dedicated to the shifting societal roles prescribed for certain genders. While sexual anarchy could be applied in relevance to both men and women, Gissing stresses women by advocating for equality, primarily through education.² Gissing writes that the “state of things is traceable to the lack of education, in all senses of the word.” In essence, the condition of women needs to be improved and the best way of improving their condition is through education. Educated women will then bring about equality between the sexes, resulting in chaos, or sexual anarchy.

¹ Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young and Pierre Coustillas, *The Collected Letters of George Gissing: Volume Six, 1895-1897* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994), 113.

² Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Viking, 1990), 11. During the late 19th century, not only were ideals of femininity being broken down, but masculinity as well. Women were expected to fulfill their biological duties as wives and mothers within the home. However, many women during this time chose to live outside of the home, breaking down conceptions of women in their domestic place. Men too were facing challenges with gender norms. On the one hand, a supposed threat of waning virility began to take hold all across Europe, causing even more rigid social roles as a defense against the feminization of men. On the other hand, some men such as “artists, sexual radicals, and intellectuals,” chose to work against these defined roles in exchange for creating more fluid gender dynamics.

I utilize Gissing's passage as a way of introducing the concept of sexual anarchy as an instigator for a new social type of unconventional women during the late nineteenth century—the New Woman. In this thesis, I examine representations of New Women within posters in both the countries of France and Japan. While the influence of Japanese art on European art is often examined through studies of *japonisme*, questions of reciprocal exchange between the two countries are often left unanswered. Furthermore, the social influences of New Womanhood are rarely examined in conjunction with artistic exchange. I argue that both France and Japan are connected through the artistic exchange of the graphic Art Nouveau as well as the social exchange of New Womanhood. Both these artistic and social exchanges worked together to form modern images of women, and thereby contribute to emerging concepts of modernity for both countries.

Having mentioned these exchanges, it is pertinent to remember Japan's relationships with the Western world prior to the nineteenth century. In the sixteenth century, Japan underwent a thriving trade period referred to as the *Nanban* trade, or "Southern barbarian trade," which began with the arrival of Portuguese and other European explorers, missionaries, and merchants.³ Because China had banned any contact with Japan during this time, Portugal often traded Chinese goods with Japan, acting as an intermediary between the two countries. By the Edo Period (1603-1858), Japan became largely isolated from the Western world due to *Sakoku*, or "closed country" policies, enacted in 1614. Through these policies, limited trade occurred, and Japanese citizens were restricted from leaving the country.⁴ In 1854, Japan was forcibly opened

³ *Nanban*, or barbarian, was originally used to refer to South Asia and Southeast Asia. By 1543, the word began to refer to the Portuguese and other Europeans during the time.

⁴ Japan largely traded with other Asian countries such as China and Korea during this time. However, not all Western contact was lost as Japan continued to trade with the Dutch through the port of Nagasaki, as well.

again by the American Commodore Matthew Perry, kick-starting the beginnings of modern Western influence on the country.

Art historian Shuji Takashina writes of the opening of Japan to the Western world explaining that when the Tokugawa Shogunate of Japan “opened the country’s doors to the West, the distance between Japan and Europe had shrunk to the point where stylistic interchanges and mutual influences were possible.”⁵ I derive the title of my thesis from this quote, and ground my arguments by asking the following: To what extent were the graphic Art Nouveau style and aspects of New Womanhood exchanged between France and Japan in the later part of the 19th and the early 20th centuries?; Were these artistic and social changes one for one, or did each country incorporate them in different ways?; and How did these exchanges contribute to the modernization of both France and Japan? In essence, how close was the distance between Japan and France during the turn of the twentieth century?

The Woman Question

George Gissing’s comments above were largely playing into debates regarding the “Woman Question” going on all across Europe and even in the East. Dating as far back as the fourteenth century, the Woman Question asked: what are the roles of women within society? In a late nineteenth century context, was a woman to adorn the domestic sphere with her beauty, as discussed by scholar Deborah Silverman, or could she actively engage in the public sphere by working or participating in politics? While some, like Gissing, believed that women should be equal to further society as a whole, others engaged with the idea that a women’s strengths lie “in

⁵ Shuji Takashina, “Eastern and Western Dynamics in the Development of Western-Style Painting During the Meiji Era,” in *Paris in Japan: The Japanese Encounter with European Painting*, ed. Shuji Takashina, J. Thomas Rimer with Gerald D. Bolas (St. Louis: Washington University, 1987), 31.

her charm,” rather than her intellect, an idea first promoted in France by Rousseau in the 18th century.⁶

For instance, women were often looked at as objects d’art, or a physical manifestation of beauty within the home. This viewpoint can be seen from the nineteenth century art critic Camille Mauclair who comments on the perception of women in portraiture. He writes, “A feminine portrait was hence always a decorative one,” as opposed to a man’s which “was a physiological document subject to analysis and moral evaluation.” While Mauclair is only speaking of visual representations, his observations can be aptly applied to viewpoints on women’s actual domestic roles. Later on, however, he also notes changing depictions of women due to the proliferation of the New Woman commenting, “A new woman is being elaborated, a pensive and active being to which a new form of painting will have to correspond.”⁷ Mauclair perpetuates the common viewpoint that women were decorative, however, he also recognizes their changing status and how art must change along with it. This thesis will further detail this observation through the medium of the poster. Before continuing, it must be noted that women as decoration was a particularly bourgeoisie outlook, and the New Woman was a middle-class phenomenon. Silverman notes that, despite French feminist aims of uniting women of all classes, many were “nonprofessional upper-middle-class society women and philanthropists.”⁸ With ideas like Gissing’s in mind, bourgeoisie women were beginning to view their role in society with a perspective that resisted patriarchal values—a role that was no longer meek, reliant, and submissive, but active, independent, and autonomous.

⁶ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. Barbara Foxley (New York: Dutton, 1948), 959.

⁷ Camille Mauclair, “La Femme devant les peintres modernes,” *La Nouvelle Revue*, 2, no. 1 (1899): 212-213.

⁸ Deborah Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1989), 65.

New Women in France and Japan

As a result of these beliefs, a unique type of woman was emerging at the end of the 19th century: she came to be known as the New Woman, or the *Femme Nouvelle* in France and the *Atarashii Onna* in Japan. The New Woman was a female type seen all across Europe and even developed in Eastern countries as a “university-educated and sexually independent” woman—both characteristics that were only afforded to men previous to the late 19th century.⁹ Further, historian Dina Lowy writes “a common characteristic [of the New Woman] was a heightened awareness of self and of gender distinctions, which led to changing views on such issues as marriage, sexuality, and fertility.”¹⁰ New Women were united together as a community through places like colleges and reform groups. Suffrage movements in both France and Japan provided places for women to express their political views and fight for a united cause. New Women often rejected a traditional domestic life as wife and mother to seek work outside of the home. Some even became active members of predominantly male career fields such as journalism, medicine, and the arts. This rejection of domestic life as a wife and mother posed a threat to some critics and commentators, who believed that the family unit was deteriorating, and the New woman was indeed a sign of chaotic anarchy.

While New Womanhood is often examined through the lens of Europe and America, this type also developed within the East in countries like Japan. As mentioned above, it is from the work of historians like Dina Lowy in her book entitled *The Japanese “New Woman”* that the study of the type in its Meiji period context has begun to come to light. During the Meiji period

⁹ Ibid., 66. In France, women did not have access to secondary education until 1880 when the Camille Sée Law was passed. Under Camille Sée law, female schools were opened with the intent of preparing “women to pursue their roles as wives and mothers under republican, rather than ecclesiastical, tutelage.” This education was not meant to prepare women for the work force, but for the home.

¹⁰ Dina Lowy, *The Japanese “New Woman”* (Piscataway, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 2.

(1868-1912), Japan was undergoing major changes relating to “industrialization, modernization, and westernization.”¹¹ The roles of Japanese women were being redefined through new access to education and the opening of job prospects, as were women in France, yet the Japanese government during the Meiji period continued to stifle women by limiting their influence through the press and political means. In chapter four, I question if Japan was also going through a similar period of “sexual anarchy” as France, and to what degree the word anarchy could be applied to the Japanese context.

Modernity and Modernism

As defined by H.H. Arnason and Elizabeth C. Mansfield, modernity “refers to the condition of post-industrial, capitalist society,” whereas modernism “is simply the cultural expression of this form of social organization.”¹² Coined by Charles Baudelaire, modernity has also been defined by time. Baudelaire writes “Modernity is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is one half art, the other being the—eternal and the immovable.”¹³ Baudelaire focuses on the fleeting nature of the current time and how this experience is manifested through the urban metropolis. He continues that it is the artist’s job to capture that experience through their art. In the late nineteenth century, France was no exception to adapting modernity characterized by capitalism, urban culture, technology, and secularism which was taking hold all over Europe. Modernity in Japan was characterized similarly, yet while modernity in the West

¹¹ Ibid., 2.

¹² H.H. Arnason and Elizabeth C. Mansfield, *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography, Sixth Edition*, (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2010), 3.

¹³ Charles Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life,” in *The Painter of Modern Life, and Other Essays*, ed. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1964), 6.

was built on a century of philosophical thought, Japan dealt with a rapid transition from feudal to modern, taking the West's enlightenment theories as their mentor.

For the purposes of this thesis, I claim that the Art Nouveau movement was a form of modernism, just as all modern art, however, in terms of the New Woman, I have chosen modernity as the more appropriate term. I argue that the New Women was formative in each country's form of modernity. As mentioned earlier in this introduction, I seek to prove that both the social exchange of New Womanhood along with the artistic exchange of the graphic Art Nouveau style contributed to both France and Japan's concept of the modern. I continue to ask throughout this thesis: How is modernity manifested in France and Japan at the turn of the twentieth century; and also, what is modern about the New Woman and the graphic Art Nouveau style? While late nineteenth century modernity is often characterized by innovation, I will not only focus on this aspect rapid mechanization, but on how the artistic and social aspects mentioned above facilitated representations of modern women in posters.

Thesis and Organization

In this thesis, I will explore how the New Women type was used in the visual culture of the poster at the turn of the twentieth century in both France and Japan. I emphasize that I am looking at visual culture, rather than high art, as the poster medium was often used for advertising purposes and nearly all my examples are advertisements. In these posters, aspects of new womanhood can be seen through images of new technologies, activity and leisure in the French context, while images of modern artistic techniques and beer consumption display aspects of modernity in Japan. Images like these were encouraged by New Women in subject matter and even further influenced women into accepting modern aspects of the new woman, an assertion I will develop more in the coming chapters.

I seek to elucidate the culture surrounding the graphics arts in Europe and Japan by analyzing the Art Nouveau and *japonisme*'s role in forming representations of women in both countries. With this knowledge, I provide a grounding for my artistic arguments on the images in analyzation. Art Nouveau artists were seeking innovative ways to merge a rapidly industrializing world with a natural one, often creating floral designs in curving patterns through modern materials such as iron. While the Art Nouveau style in France was brought to fruition through architecture, decorative objects, and even fashionable jewelry pieces, its manifestation through the graphic arts is distinctively influenced by Japanese woodblock prints. Thus, in the medium of the graphic arts, a connection between France and Japan is formed. Equally as influential, the European Art Nouveau influenced Japanese graphic artists, as well. This was manifested through a circular exchange which I will detail in the following chapters.

Graphic artists in both France and Japan portray women in both progressive and regressive ways through the poster medium. I look into the artistic and social exchange between France and Japan at the end of the century, debating whether this exchange was equal. Also, I explore to what extent the “*Woman Question*” in the West brought about a “*Woman Problem*” in the East, as well as the emergence of first wave feminism and new women themselves in both countries. What was it that made the emergence of the modern twentieth century “*New Woman*” in Japan different than in the French context, and how did this social context translate into an artistic one?

In considering these questions, I hope to parse the dynamics of French New Womanhood alongside Japanese New Womanhood through the lens of the posters of graphic artists working in France and Japan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By doing this, I want to compare and contrast the artworks of each culture in order to illustrate not only Japan's artistic

effect on France and the way artists portrayed women, but also France's social and artistic influence on Japanese art and culture as a form of mutual relationship. Each culture is going through similar social transitions, which brought about each culture's own adaption of new womanhood—a product of modernity. While it is well-known that French art was influenced by Japanese art, I differ from usual studies by focusing on the exchange that went both ways. In other words, I focus not solely on what France gleaned from Japanese culture, but what Japan embraced from French culture, as well.

I have chosen to focus on the work of graphic artists working in France during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as well as graphic artists in Japan during this time. Specifically, I will analyze works by Alphonse Mucha, along with Jules Chéret, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec as they provide excellent examples of this late 19th century cultural exchange, along with other graphic artists at the time. In the Eastern context, it is important to note, as art historian Richard Thornton points out that “The intent [of the Meiji Restoration] was more to modernize, not just Westernize. When changes did occur, every attempt was made to retain ‘the spirit of old Japan’.”¹⁴ While the French New Woman was typically resistant of patriarchal domination, the Japanese New Woman was maneuvering through not only resistance of this patriarchal domination, but also working to maintain her Japanese culture in the process, which could have easily been subsumed by Western ideals.

In connecting French and Japanese posters at the turn of the 20th century, I consider dynamic portrayals of New Womanhood in both countries. My second chapter discusses the Art Nouveau movement and its connections with *japonisme*. In this chapter, I provide examples of how Art Nouveau style as well as Japanese style can be seen in both French and Japanese

¹⁴ Richard S. Thornton, *Japanese Graphic Design* (London: Laurence King Ltd., 1991), 28.

posters, providing evidence of the intrinsically circular artistic relationship between the two countries. In my third chapter, when focusing on France, I situate my chapter in an analysis of the prevailing *fin de siècle* perspective of the time period, and what the characteristics were of the French *malaise*. I then continue by looking at representations of New Women through technologies, such as the bicycle and the théâtrophone, and leisure activities, like drinking and smoking, detailing how women were characterized in multiple ways as a reaction to what some believed to be an “anarchical” time period.

In my fourth chapter, I will focus on the Japanese context of the Meiji period, the time period when New Womanhood was emerging in Japan. While it has been difficult to find images that parallel the images I have used for the French context exactly, I focus on late Meiji period department store advertising posters that portray Japanese women in modern ways through their artistic depictions. Additionally, I focus on beer advertisements that provide a nice parallel with the posters I have chosen that depict leisure in the French context.

CHAPTER 2
THE MODERN STYLE: GRAPHIC ARTISTIC EXCHANGE BETWEEN FRANCE AND
JAPAN

...the poster is the epitome of instability: it breeds incessantly, keeps changing, and lacks substance.

Maurice Talmeyr¹
L'âge de l'affiche

According to art historian Ruth Iskin, late nineteenth century Paris was the “capital of the poster.” It was in Paris that Jules Chéret first “developed the illustrated color lithograph poster” around the late 1860’s and continued until the middle of the 1890’s. Chéret’s work went on to inspire a younger generation of artists working in Paris made up of artists such as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Alphonse Mucha, Alexandre Steinlen and Eugène Grasset—all artists I will speak about in this and the coming chapters.² Commenting on the poster in the quote above, the conservative French journalist and novelist Maurice Talmeyr writes about the fleeting nature of mass-produced posters which are undeniably characteristic of French modernity. He describes posters as the “epitome of instability.”

While Talmeyr is obviously writing about the poster, his statements too, could be thought of in terms of common sentiments about women prior to and during the nineteenth century. He describes the poster as “breeding incessantly,” “changing,” and lacking “substance.” However, these were not characteristics of the *Femme Nouvelle*, but rather conservative views on the characteristics of women generally: they were mothers, emotional, and uneducated. Just as the Art Nouveau encompassed both tradition and modernity, so too were women changing to fulfill

¹ Maurice Talmeyr, “L’âge de l’affiche,” *Revue des Deux Mondes* 137, no. 9 (1896): 207.

² Ruth Iskin, *The Poster: Art Advertising, Design and Collection, 1860s-1900* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Dartmouth College Press, 2014), 2.

roles outside of the home as well as maintaining their traditional roles. In fact, New Women displayed exactly the opposite characteristics that Talmeyr describes: they weren't becoming mothers, they did not let themselves be reduced to their emotions, and they had a great deal of substance through their educations and jobs. Thus, in the midst of changing technologies of mass production, so too do we see resistance to modernity on a conservative's part.

While Chéret was busy developing the poster in France during the 1860s, Japan was dealing with an influx of Western influence. In 1854, Commodore Matthew C. Perry, along with his fleet of "Black Ships," traveled from America to Japan to organize diplomatic agreements between the two countries.³ The ports of Japan were finally open, not only to America but to Europe as well, after a 250-year abstention from Western trade. Not only were goods exchanged, but the social ideology of New Womanhood and the artistic influences of the graphic Art Nouveau style propelled the country into a modern twentieth century—a twentieth century characterized by the booming mechanization of industrialism all across the world. After giving an overview of the Art Nouveau, its origins, and international context, I will focus on the movement's iteration within the graphic arts in both France and Japan. Though this style is not necessarily evident in all posters made during this time, it is a valuable source for understanding the artistic aspects of the New Woman in posters during the turn of the twentieth century. Through an analysis of the graphic Art Nouveau style first in France and then in Japan, I lay out the underlying artistic forms which tether the two countries together, making them vital to the development of each other's representation of the New Woman type.

³ Julia Meech and Gabriel P. Weisberg, *Japonisme Comes to America: The Japanese Impact on the Graphic Arts 1876-1925* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc. Publishers, 1990), 7.

The Art Nouveau

While the Art Nouveau is often characterized in scholarship as an international movement, the scope of its geographical reach has been regularly limited to European and American contexts. However, a study of Japanese graphic arts at the turn of the 19th century has demonstrated the movement's reach into an Eastern realm. As Stephen Escritt writes, "Art Nouveau not only spread across Europe; it manifested itself wherever Europeans went."⁴ When the American Commander Perry opened trade between the West and Japan in 1854, Europeans themselves, along with their goods, ideas, and artistic practices, were welcomed by the Meiji regime and used by the Japanese to transform Japan into a modern global competitor. So often, Art Nouveau artists working in France are recognized for taking influence from Japanese woodblock prints, but it is rarely explored whether this influence was felt in a Japanese context and to what extent Japanese artists were influenced by Western art movements. In this section, I seek to explain what constitutes Art Nouveau style and to detail its iterations in both France and Japan, as well as the general iconography of women in both contexts. This information will allow me to make clear the connections between the Art Nouveau movement as a circular transfer of artistic styles between France and Japan.

Art Nouveau throughout the World

At the core of the Art Nouveau movement was a paradox between tradition and modernity—both aspects that could describe the wider time period of the *fin-de-siècle* as well. The movement has occurred throughout the world in many different contexts. Below I use the American and Argentinian context to display this, before diving more in the French in Japanese.

⁴ Stephen Escritt, *Art Nouveau*, (London: Phaidon, 2000), 5.

However, before understanding these different contexts, it is valuable to know the origins of the movement.

The Art Nouveau gained its name from the opening of Siegfried Bing's art gallery *L'Art Nouveau* in 1895. Bing had become familiar with the term in the Brussels-based magazine *L'Art moderne* when it was used to describe a group of artists in Brussels called the *Les Vingt*, or "the Twenty." *Les Vingt's* aim was a "reform of the arts and society as a whole," seeking to get away from the traditional Salon system of showing art and to focus more on symbolist painting which emphasized mystery, allusion, and symbol rather than daily life presented by the Impressionists.⁵

Though the Art Nouveau movement had begun forming around the early 1880's, the movement's pan-European and American debut was not until the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris where it was formally recognized as the contemporary style of decorative and applied arts. Rather than manifesting itself through painting, as earlier movements like Impressionism had done, the style was applied to architecture, interior design, furniture, ceramics, textiles, and jewelry, allowing for its design to take on utilitarian as well as decorative purposes.⁶ As Escritt writes, "Radical Art Nouveau designers set out to shatter historicism and create a style appropriate to their time... Yet the more conservative embarked upon a mission to rescue the guiding principles of traditional craftsmanship and elegance, to update them rather than overthrow them."⁷ Thus, some Art Nouveau artists found themselves seated in traditional art styles—such as the Medieval, Gothic, and Rococo—even working to reclaim them, but others

⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁷ Ibid., 7.

endeavored to work with the industrial world in the pursuit of modern materials. Scholar Iain Black, sums up the movement's contradictions nicely:

Art Nouveau embodied a deep-seated duality in its constitution and expression: on the one hand, it sought to address the experience of modernity directly, drawing upon new technological possibilities to express the excitement and vitality of modern industrial society; on the other, it provided a creative space for those who rejected the levelling qualities of machine age production to escape into a world of spiritualism, fantasy, and myth.⁸

It is in each country's iteration of the style as well as its ability to be transformed into many different mediums that we find these contradictions played out fully.

For instance, in America Louis Comfort Tiffany was the most well-known artist participating in the movement and is exemplary of more conservative aspects of the Art Nouveau. He worked in many of the above medias and genres (glass, ceramics, jewelry, furniture, interior design) selling his services and wares in his New York shop and Bing's gallery in Paris, adding a particularly commercial element to the art he produced. Tiffany was most known for creating pieces, such as vases, out of a particular type of glass he developed called *favrite* (Figure A-1). *Favrite* glass was characterized by an iridescent sheen meant to resemble the natural patinas found on ancient Greek glass discovered by archaeologists. The word *favrite* was inspired by the Old English word *fabrile* meaning "hand-wrought," drawing attention to Tiffany's emphasis on hand-crafted objects. However, Tiffany altered the word to *favril*, adding a V to make it more accessible to French speakers, a primary portion of his clientele.⁹ Tiffany's

⁸ Black, "Art Nouveau 1890-1914," *The London Journal* 25, no. 2 (2013): 111.

⁹ Charles Dekay, *The Art Work of Louis C. Tiffany* (Poughkeepsie, New York: Apollo, 1987): 25. This combination of old English, ancient Greek glass, and modern French preferences displays the fusion of old and new working within Art Nouveau design. While Tiffany's mission was to educate the American public on "good taste" by harkening back to natural and ancient simplicities, he also worked in a contemporary market to appeal to audience's diverse preferences, producing a lucrative business of selling pieces that stood out in a period of mass production.

favrite glass exemplifies the use of traditional modes of craftsmanship to produce modern objects—objects that were distributed all across Europe and America.

The Art Nouveau was a prominent style in South America, as well. While Tiffany's American style was largely derived from the same sources as the French Art Nouveau (various international sources rooted in Japan, Greece, and the Middle East), South American Art Nouveau was a movement that had a "distinctly imported feel" due to the many European immigrants entering the country at the time.¹⁰ For instance, in Argentina the French-born architect Pablo Pater designed eclectic ironwork on many historic buildings. In a cast-iron balcony on a building at 1175 Ríobamba Street in Buenos Aires, Escritt describes Pater's style of the balcony as "a combination of French Beaux-Arts ornamentation on the façade with elaborate geometric stylizations of floral forms" (Figure A-2).¹¹ Indeed, the balcony displays the blooming floral bouquet of flowers framed by two intersecting semi-circles. The bouquet of flowers is then framed again by a series of geometric patterns, creating a symmetrical composition.

Pater ventures into displaying classic European decoration, while also incorporating modern geometric patterns, merging styles to create a unique design. Pater's use of iron exemplifies Argentina's booming iron-casting industry which was anxious to display the malleability of this medium through Art Nouveau creations. Through Pater's work, we see a combination of styles and industry forming the South American Art Nouveau. Through these examples of the Art Nouveau style in both the United States and Argentina, its global reach is evident. To come in this section, I will further define the Art Nouveau style and speak about its

¹⁰ Escritt, *Art Nouveau*, 289.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 292.

iteration in Japan more clearly, demonstrating how each country pulled from the other to form their own artistic styles of modernity.

The French Art Nouveau Style

To understand Art Nouveau style, it is helpful to outline some of its primary artistic characteristics. Among these characteristics are not only curving lines referred to as “whiplash” but also geometric ones, floral and natural elements, and most importantly in terms of this thesis, the presence of women, and even sometimes the New Woman. Alphonse Mucha’s work involving the French actress Sarah Bernhardt displays these motifs within a graphic context nicely. Take for instance a poster he designed for the French magazine *La Plume* done in association with an article on Bernhardt entitled “*La Princesse Lointaine*” after the name of one of one of her most successful plays (Figure A-3).

Here, we see Mucha’s rendering of Bernhardt in the third act of the play wearing a lilly-laden tiara, also designed by Mucha.¹² The poster displays Bernhardt at the center of the composition. She is shown from the shoulders up and faces directly forward with her chin slightly raised. Around her face is a profusion of flowing red hair. This is a common motif of Mucha’s women—massive bundles of flowing hair. Much like vines hanging from a tree limb, the long tendrils cascade down Bernhardt’s chest, and past the frame of her body, leading one to read the name of the magazine along with its publication date and her name. Bernhardt’s red curls end in perfect semi-circles, here displaying the curvilinear lines so often present in Art Nouveau graphic design. However, the curls of Bernhardt’s hair are not the only curving lines displayed here, but also the light blue circle that displays Bernhardt’s name and frames her face.

¹² Jack Rennert and Alain Weill, *Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Posters and Panels* (Boston: A Hjert & Hjert Books, 1984), 110.

This is only mimicked by the smaller arched circles which appear directly below the blue circle and on Bernhardt's clothing, as well, both reminiscent of medieval arches and pendants. In opposition, the angular grouping of stars which fill the poster's background display a use of geometrical pattern.

Aside from Mucha's use of line, the tiara placed on Bernhardt's head is particularly indicative of the Art Nouveau use of floral motifs. Mucha has designed a tiara incorporating actual lilies as a decoration adorning Bernhardt's head. It is as if Bernhardt's hair has naturally sprouted the plant as the petals are widely opened in abundant blooms. Compare Mucha's rendering of the lilies to the actual headpiece created in Figures A-4 and A-5. In an actual photograph of Bernhardt wearing the tiara, the lilies don't look nearly as alive because they are not. Noting other differences, Bernhardt's hair isn't nearly as flowing as her image in the poster. Lastly, while both images of Bernhardt hold their mouths slightly open, the angle of their bodies are different; in the poster she faces front while in the photo she is slightly angled. Taken together, the two express the difference between the pictorial Art Nouveau and its reality. This demonstrates the tendency for male Art Nouveau artists to project women as sources for mystery, allusion, and symbolism within the graphic Art Nouveau medium.

In Mucha's poster, the use of the lilies is used to enhance the femininity of Bernhardt, an aspect constantly heightened by Art Nouveau artists, and as I claim, a reaction to the changing roles of women during the time. While perhaps a "sexual anarchy," or all-out chaos, is not present here, Bernhardt's alluring depiction by Mucha suggests this reaction to the New Woman type. By objectifying Bernhardt as an image of ideal beauty, Mucha is downplaying a progressive image of womanhood that was common during the time—images I will analyze thoroughly in the next chapter. While Bernhardt, an extremely successful actress, displayed

many aspects of new womanhood in her actual life, here in Mucha's poster and even in the photograph, she is subjected into not only the literal role she is playing, but a social one—one that casts her as an adornment rather than a highly autonomous and working woman.

With images like this in mind, it is clear that Art Nouveau artists working in France were not necessarily pushing for progressive images of women aligning with the *Femme Nouvelle*, but often perpetuating a feminine beauty tethered to nature and patriarchal spiritual fantasy. While the *Femme Nouvelle*, in both pictorial and physical form, pushed to contradict images of women as adornments for the domestic space, many Art Nouveau artists seemed to cherish these images as a reaction to a changing of gender roles. Escritt writes, "Suggestive both of 'ideal' feminine beauty and of fears regarding the *femme nouvelle*, these representations of women could serve as metaphors for anything from purity and tranquility to evil and temptations."¹³ While Bernhardt in this poster does not display characteristics of the *femme nouvelle*, though she was one herself, it does prove to display artistic conventions established throughout the Art Nouveau style, and provides a contrast by showing the conservative image of women at the time.

Japonisme

While I have mentioned that the Art Nouveau style largely drew from artistic movements of the past, the style also pulled heavily from Eastern influences. Artists were influenced by ancient Eastern cultures such as the Egyptians and Assyrians, incorporating scarabs or arabesque qualities into their art.¹⁴ However, I would like to focus on the influence that Art Nouveau artists took from Japanese art. During the late 19th century, Siegfried Bing was largely responsible for the popularization of Japanese art within France through his shops and journal *Le Japon*

¹³ Escritt, *Art Nouveau*, 89.

¹⁴ Malcom Haslam, *In the Nouveau Style* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 16.

Artistique (Figure A-6). In this journal, Bing “identified Japanese art as an ‘art nouveau’ that would have a lasting impact and seductive influence on European creativity.”¹⁵ Hence, Western styles of art drew from with Eastern styles, producing a creative new French style. This incorporation of Japanese elements into Western art was known as *japonisme*. While its influence can be seen in Post-Impressionist painting, such as that of Van Gogh, its presence in the Art Nouveau graphic arts is particularly pertinent to evaluating artistic exchanges between France and Japan in conjunction with images of new womanhood.

The term *japonisme* was coined in 1872 prior to the culmination of the style. The French art critic Philippe Burty “implied that *Japonisme* was the process of understanding Japanese art, culture, and life solely through visual contact with the art of Japan.”¹⁶ The first major retrospective of Japanese art in France was held on April 10th, 1883 and introduced “major themes and styles of *ukiyo-e* prints” to the French public.¹⁷ However, it was not until 1889 that Japanese aesthetics began to have an impact on the “printmaking renaissance” occurring in Paris in which the process of woodblock printing techniques and color printmaking began to dominate.¹⁸ Japanese printing techniques became indispensable to artists like Denis, Bonnard, Vuillard, and Lautrec who could not refrain from using aspects from the works of Japanese artists like Hiroshige, in which they claimed “his talent is of the most eloquent modernity.” Searching for innovation, these artists learned not to merely imitate Japanese art, but to incorporate its method and design into their own style of Art Nouveau poster.

¹⁵Gabriel Weisberg, *Art Nouveau Bing* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1986), 26.

¹⁶ Phillip Dennis Cate, “Japanese Influence on French Prints 1883-1910,” in *Japonisme: Japanese Influence on French Art 1854-1910*, ed. Gabriel P. Weisberg, Phillip Dennis Cate, Gerald Needham, Martin Eidelberg and William R. Johnston (London: Robert G. Sawers Publications, 1975), 54.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

Many Art Nouveau graphic artist incorporated the newly discovered Japanese style into their art. For instance, after being introduced to Japanese prints by the American artist Harry Humphrey Moore in 1882, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec latched onto this current in contemporary art styles and became one of its most acclaimed devotees. In Lautrec's works *La Goulue au Moulin Rouge* and *Le Divan Japonais* Japanese aesthetics are fully present (Figure A-7 and A-8). Phillip Dennis Cate writes, "Lautrec revolutionized the art of poster-making by borrowing compositional systems from the Japanese wood cut to negate illusionist space and unite the pattern of pictorial elements with that of the lettering." Lautrec also borrowed from the Japanese color palette by using "subtle yellows and olive greens," as well as depicting women in a similar way to the artist Kiyonaga. For instance, in *Le Divan Japonais*, Cate claims that Lautrec pictures Jane Avril's "sleek body" along with the "figure of Dujardin" which "lie as curvilinear patterns on the same plane as the sinuously and monochromatically delineated grey orchestra, yellow stage, and the decapitated body of Yvette Gilbert."¹⁹ With examples like those of Lautrec, it seems that western women stylized in Japanese form were both captivating and pleasing to the eye—this eye which I will assert in the next chapter was not solely male.

Japonisme in French Art Nouveau Graphic Arts. Again, looking at the works of Alphonse Mucha, aspects of *japonisme* can be found in his well-known JOB poster from 1898 (Figure A-9). Seemingly floating in space, much like the floating world of Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints, the maiden pictured here sits, legs crossed with her hand resting on her right leg. In her resting hand, she casually holds a packet of JOB cigarette papers between her thumb and index fingers. Thoughtfully looking, she examines the cigarette she has presumably just rolled and holds it in front of her face in her right hand. A stream of smoke is emitted from the cigarette, but

¹⁹ Cate, "Japanese Influence," 64-65.

instead of floating away and slowly disappearing, it floats up and behind the woman's head as if held together like a stiff piece of tissue paper, perhaps reflecting the paper product in hand.

Making a reference to ancient dress, as many of the clothing worn by Mucha's maidens do, the woman wears a long flowing blush pink strapless dress, not held together or accented by any visible seam-work. Only a metal brooch that subtly spells out the word JOB in a geometric pattern is placed in between her bosom—however, this seems to be more for decorative purposes rather than utility. The pattern of the brooch is echoed in the yellow background that lines the picture like wallpaper. According to Jack Rennert and Alain Weill, this circle “to him, symbolizes infinity and universal harmony.” However, they note, quoting Brian Reade, the circle could also “represent ‘compulsive erotic symbolism’.”²⁰ However, this eroticism is not a threatening erotic allure, but more contained within the parameters of selling the product. It is obvious Mucha is playing, yet again, upon a female erotic allure, that runs counter to more progressive displays of femininity at the time.

It is clear that the poster borrows visually from Japanese art. For instance, the figure's black flowing hair, along with the background are fields of unmodulated color, a common feature in Japanese prints. Only in her skin and dress do we see slightly differing shades of pink. Additionally, the heavy contours of the figure's shoulders and arms contributes to a sense of flatness that is also reminiscent of the Japanese style. It is curious that Mucha has decided to endow his maiden with dark hair, when so many of his women are blonde or light brown. He also gives her what appears to be a combination of European and Japanese facial features. Perhaps she evokes a courtesan in a Japanese woodblock print from the Edo period? Her hair is

²⁰ Jack Rennert and Alain Weill, *Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Posters and Panels* (Boston: A Hjert & Hjert Book, 1984), 204.

pinned up, a bulbous bun messily sitting atop her head full of flowing curls of long hair. In this regard, the combination of European and Japanese features is clear. The bun on Mucha's figure closely resembles the elaborate hairstyles of a Japanese courtesan, yet he allows her hair to curl and twist in a way commonly shown on European woman. Thus, we see common artistic features in Japanese art here in Mucha's graphic Art Nouveau style.

To confirm this comparison, I will examine an actual Japanese Edo print. Referring back to the hairstyle, there is a long hairstyle in prints like one presumably by Rigyoku from 1765, even though this hairstyle was uncommon in Edo prints (Figure A-10). Prints like the one by Rigyoku were known as *mitate* and commissioned by poets to provide retellings of literature. In these retellings, the characters were designed to incorporate "a modern style by introducing an element of pose, posture, costume, or iconography."²¹ Perhaps in Japan, the woman's hairstyle is the note to modernity, as this hairstyle was not prevalent till the 1850's. Taken from the *Tale of Ise*, the *mitate* shows Prince Narihira sneaking through a wall to meet his lover who wears her hair long and pulled half up with a large clip.

Mucha's woman, the lover's light pink kimono, also made of flowing fabric, parallels more closely the iconography of Mucha's figure. Both artists use of geometry and florals (seen in the patterns on the lover's kimono and in the background of Mucha's figure), suggest that Mucha could have been influenced by Edo prints like this. Again, also in this print, we see the modular color fields of Japanese prints, as well as the heavy contours of the style. In this print, the heavy contour is particularly seen in the outline of the opening in the wall. Additionally, the flatness of the print is emphasized through the diagonal lines on the wall, as well as the cloud in the sky.

²¹ Roger S. Keyes, *Japanese Woodblock Prints: A Catalogue of the Mary A. Ainsworth Collection* (Oberlin: Oberlin College, 1984), 31.

However, the most convincing argument links back to Reade's theory that the circle in Mucha's prints are of an erotic nature. This theory finds confirmation in the representation of the Prince, framed by a circular opening in the wall, who presses his hand down on the train of his lover's kimono, as if to hold her from getting away. While Mucha's figure seems to be entrapped seductively in a circle of pleasure, the Prince is going through a circle into a world of which his lover is already a part—making the transition from the fussy rituals of the court in order pass into a world of sexual bliss, which is only made dreamier by the floating cloud above their heads.

Art Nouveau in Japanese Graphic Arts

I would like to elaborate the circular artistic exchange that occurred between France and Japan as a result of Japan's opening to the West in 1854. While studies of nineteenth century painting commonly consider the influence of Japanese art on European art during the nineteenth century, scholarship on the emergence of the Art Nouveau in Japan occurs less. After Japan was opened to the West, Japanese artists strove to create realistic works of art in the Western style which often abandoned the flatness of traditional Japanese woodblock prints. This Western style of painting was referred to as *yoga*. However, according to Shuji Takashina, Japanese artists painting in the *yoga* style did not fully understand the aesthetic principles dating back to the Renaissance which formed the basis for Western techniques creating three-dimensionality, such as spatial depth and solidity, but simply used these techniques as a way of rendering realism.²² Japanese *yoga* painters often focused more on revitalizing Neo-Classicism as well as Impressionism, and did not incorporate Art Nouveau style into paintings in the Western style. However, Japanese graphic artists who were willing to push beyond traditional practice, did develop new styles that incorporated Art Nouveau elements. In fact, Art Nouveau influence was

²² Takashina, "Eastern and Westerner", 24.

particularly relevant for late nineteenth century Japanese graphic arts. While perhaps the style was not as prevalent in Japan as it was in Europe, it still made an impact in terms of depicting a Modern Japan—primarily through their representations of women.

Let us return to the first Mucha image of Sarah Bernhardt mentioned in this chapter. In their book *Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Posters and Panels*, Jack Rennert and Alain Weill describes different variations by other artists of the *La Plume* poster. Among these variations, they point out one that was printed as the cover of the Japanese magazine *Miyoko* in 1901 (Figure A-11). Though the Japanese artist is not named, it is clear that he was referring to Mucha's image. While many of the elements of the Japanese image appear underdeveloped (such as the figures face, the background, her dress, the circle around her head, and even the coloring of the image), the lengths this artist went to to capture Bernhardt's hair and the lily tiara suggest an importance that was given to these elements of femininity even in Japanese culture. After all, the Japanese artist decided to include the Venus symbol on the star in the center of Bernhardt's tiara, giving even more emphasis to the fact that this woman evokes an ethereal and fantastical feminine beauty.

Though it is unclear whether the Japanese public would have known that this image was modeled after Bernhardt, as her name is nowhere to be found on the cover, the symbolism of her beauty was clearly international. Let's take, for instance, the iconic circle that appears around the figure's head. The Japanese artist has chosen not to include Bernhardt's name as Mucha did, but the name of the magazine written in the Western alphabet. This certainly takes emphasis away from who the woman is and puts more emphasis on her image in general, perhaps promoting her as a more universal image of femininity. In the Japanese version, Bernhardt displays an ideal and dreamlike version of Western beauty, just as she does in Mucha's. However, Bernhardt could be

any idealized Western woman. Here, Bernhardt is clearly not displaying a Japanese femininity, but stands more as an ephemeral symbol of the West—one meant to be consumed and then thrown out like the magazine she is printed on.

Also in reference to Mucha, we see the direct influence of the West on Japanese graphic arts in a poster by Tsunetomi Kitano for the export trade fair at Kobe (Figure A-12). Here, the floating maiden resembles the figure in Mucha's JOB poster closely. While the two figures are not posed similarly, their clothes, hair, and the poppies in each's hair display a clear resemblance. While it is not clear whether the figure in Mucha's JOB poster is European or Japanese, a similar uncertainty occurs in Kitano's. It could be assumed that she is a Japanese maiden, but the fact that the poster is advertising an international fair (hence the many different flags), could suggest a hybridization of both Japanese and European artistic styles. Kitano also frames his figure with a clearly Art Nouveau influenced circle, almost identical to ones used by Mucha. Again, it is in poster's like these that the evidence of the Art Nouveau in Japan is clear.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have made a case for a better understanding of the cross-cultural graphic Art Nouveau style. As I have established earlier in the chapter, women were undeniably tangled within its aesthetic web as subjects. While often depicted as alluring maidens adorned with floral decorations, in the following chapter I will discuss the Art Nouveau new woman and all her ambiguities within French posters. However, equally important is how these depictions of women are connected to *japonisme*, as both France and Japan have taken artistically from each other establishing a somewhat circular exchange: with opening of trade in 1854, Europe was exposed to Japanese art and Japan to French art. Thus, the line of influence was not only jump started by trade, but also Japan's imitation of art that had been imitated after them. With this imitation came each country's own unique style, that propelled them into modernity.

CHAPTER 3
FIN DE SIÈCLE CRISIS?: THE FEMME NOUVELLE AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

He snarls about the end of all true womanliness, cants on the subject of the Sphere, and threatens that if we . . . shall be afflicted with short hair, coarse skins, unsymmetrical figures, loud voices, tastelessness in dress, and an unattractive appearance and character generally then he will not love us any more or marry us. And this is one of the most amusing of his threats, because he has said and proved on so many occasions that he cannot live without us whatever we are. . . True womanliness is not in danger. . . .

Sarah Grand¹
The New Aspect of the Woman Question

Sarah Grand, the Irish feminist writer, is best known for coining the term New Woman in her 1894 article entitled “The New Aspect of the Woman Question.” In this article Grand explains how women were subjected into submissive gender roles by men. In the quote above taken from Grand’s article, she comments on men’s perception of the New Woman: a woman that is lacking “true womanliness” and is unmarriageable. At this threat of non-marriage Grand writes, “And this is one of the most amusing of his threats, because he has said and proved on so many occasions that he cannot live without us whatever we are.” Amused at men’s tactics, Grand describes one of the main fears of men regarding the new woman: that perhaps women will not marry him.

Sarah Grand exemplifies a fear regarding the proliferation of the New Woman—that women would begin to lose their “womanliness” and devolve into having “short hair, coarse skins, and unsymmetrical figures.” This was but one fear surrounding New Women, however. Others, as Deborah Silverman describes, were the social question, or Women question as I have detailed in my introduction; women’s new access to education which allowed them to begin accessing traditionally male dominated professions; and the “decline in the birthrate and relative

¹ Sarah Grand, “The New Aspect of the Woman Question,” *The North American Review* 158, no. 448 (1894), 274.

stagnation of the French population.”² While these fears were limited to the realm of women, late nineteenth century France also held other wider fears, as well.

In this chapter, I seek to elucidate *fin de siècle* France in order to contextualize the *Femme Nouvelle*'s place within it. Once I have established this historical background, I will look into a series of images depicting women in France at the turn of the century, while also continuing to contextualize her within the first-wave feminist movement. While some of the images in question could provide multiple readings, and are rather ambiguous, I will analyze them asking to what extent they pose aspects of New Womanhood, and by extension modernity. Using work by graphic artists working in France, one finds French women energetically participating in modernity through the technology of the bicycle and even such devices as the théâtrophone, as well as through the leisure of drinking and smoking. I will evaluate these images in terms both of their potential as images of “sexual anarchy” as well as in terms of the three questions underling my thesis stated in my introduction, as well. Rephrasing my three questions to fit this chapter specifically, I ask of the French posters in question: To what extent was the graphic Art Nouveau style used in representing the *Femme Nouvelle*?; How did graphic artists working in France incorporate the *Femme Nouvelle* into their work?; and How did representations of the *Femme Nouvelle* contribute to the modernization France?

The *Fin de Siècle*

When Max Nordau, an eccentric and often dismissed social critic, wrote in his first chapter of *Degeneration* (1892) that “the French ascribe their own senility to the century,” he was engaging in a prevailing discussion of the day: one pertaining to the late 19th century proclivity toward *malaise*. *Malaise* was a general discomfort at the prospect of an impending 20th

² Silverman, *Art Nouveau*, 63-66.

century. While expressed across Europe, this discomfort was particularly felt by the French bourgeoisie for a variety of different reasons. In the wake of the French loss in the war against Prussia, an economic downturn, the rising “consumption of alcohol, the spread of atheism and crime, the general decline of family ties,” and the overall “deterioration of morals,” some French citizens considered themselves in declining times.³ This discomfort about the coming of a new century led to characterizations of this time period as a *fin de siècle*, or the end of the century, with an emphasis placed on the “*fin*”.

The first usage of the expression derives from around 1890 when it was often used synonymously with the word “modern.” However, as Nordau explained in his first chapter, the word carried multiple meanings in different contexts.⁴ Even in contemporary discourse, the definition of *fin de siècle* is rarely fixed and is often surrounded by such negative terms as “crisis,” “apocalypse,” “decay,” “degeneration,” and “decadence.” The varying degrees to which the “*fin*” in *fin de siècle* referred to an “The End” is often debated. While some during the 1890s saw the close of the nineteenth century as apocalyptic—a destruction of morality and defined social roles of biblical proportions—still to others it provoked uneasiness, a mere changing of the times. With this backdrop, Gissing’s prediction of “sexual anarchy” had an optimal place to thrive, and the *Femme Nouvelle* was at its core.

While discrepancies in the meaning of *fin de siècle* may shed light on an attitude the French felt toward the coming century, it is important to address that the *malaise* of the *fin de siècle* was just one reaction to the ending of the century. Some embraced the dawn of the 20th

³ Walter Laqueur, “Fin-de-siècle: Once More with Feeling,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 31, no. 1 (1996): 5.

⁴ Nordau, Max. *Degeneration*. London: William Heinemann, 1898. Refer to Nordau’s first chapter of *Degeneration* which gives multiple examples of the usage of *fin de siècle* in an 1890’s context. For instance, he gives brief descriptions of a king, a police official, a bishop, and others in situations that were described as *fin de siècle* during the time period. All of these situations display inconsistent meanings of the term.

century and even recalled it positively in later years, referring to it as a *Belle Époque*. For these optimists, the coming century was characterized by a variety of innovation that contributed to modernizing society. As Walter Laqueur recalls, this was, after all, the period in which the Eiffel Tower stood over the city as an exciting symbol of French industrialism. This was the time period of Marie Curie “working in her laboratory on radium” and the opening of the “first permanent cinema” in Paris which showed George Méliès’s film *The Dreyfus Affair* for the first time. Because of achievements like these, there was optimism for a better time to come—a “natural appetite” for enjoyment “based on the realization that life was getting better” for all the citizens of France.⁵ Thus, with this backdrop of differing viewpoints on the period, representations of the *Femme Nouvelle* can better be understood.

The *Femme Nouvelle* and First-Wave Feminism

Despite France’s slow progress in attaining such feminist goals as suffrage, France has provided a fertile ground for feminist thought and reform dating back to the French revolution.⁶ The movement when women all across the world were taking legal action into their own hands, first-wave feminism began to come to fruition at the turn of the twentieth-century. As detailed in Chapter 4, Japan was no exception to this movement. At the turn of the twentieth century, French women were still fighting against a patriarchal culture in the hopes of gaining equal rights. One of the most pressing issues was suffrage.

Though French women did not gain suffrage until 1945, putting them some years behind America where women got the vote in 1920 and in Britain in 1928, the French suffragette

⁵ Laqueur, “Fin-de-siecle,” 21-22.

⁶ .” Jennifer Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause, introduction to *Feminisms of the Belle Époque: A Historical and Literary Anthology*, ed. Jennifer Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 2-3.

movement was a key aspect to first-wave feminism in France. In 1909, the French Union for Women's Suffrage was established, and women began to fight for their right to vote in an officially organized manner. However, while this group was secular, other groups like the Catholic Women's Suffrage Movement formed through the church, advocating for a "Christian feminist" outlook, which was often against the right to divorce. By building their base through the church, the Catholic Women's Suffrage Movement recruited "more women to suffragism than all other feminist groups combined."⁷

Why did gaining suffrage take so long in France? While protestant countries tended to progress more quickly in women's reforms, Jennifer Waelti-Walter's and Steven Hause attribute France's delay not only to its Catholic religion, which stressed "obedience to authority," but also to its legal and political systems. For instance, women were reduced "to the status of being permanent minors, without direct rights of their own." This could be seen prominently in Napoleon's codification of French civil law in 1804 which legally required wives to obey their husbands and an imposed number of other restrictions. Also, politically the French could not escape Catholic conservatism under monarchical rulers such as the Bourbons and even after establishing the Third Republic (1871-1940), it was feared that giving women equal rights would enable them to "aid conservative enemies of the republic." While suffrage was delayed due to Catholicism and the legal system, this did not hinder the formation of the *Femme Nouvelle* as an agent for feminist action

Outside of suffrage, feminist groups pushed proposals concerning marriage, education, paternity, work, the right to own property and even the wording of laws themselves made up the

⁷ Steven C. Hause and Anne R. Kenney, "The Development of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Movement in France, 1896-1922," *The Catholic Historical Review* 67, no. 1 (1981): 11.

reformist agendas of many feminist groups such as the Congress on the Condition of Rights of Women and The French Group of Feminist Studies.⁸ These issues appeared simultaneously on the different groups agendas, but each group varied in stance. As mentioned above, multiple women's rights organizations were founded under religious institutions like the Catholic church and, while advocating for women, they also pushed for more conservative reforms that were against divorce, abortion, and birth control.⁹ The Catholic groups *Féminisme chrétien* (Christian Feminism), *Action social de la femme* (Social Action of Women) and *Devoir des femmes françaises* (Duty of French Women) were active in 1900-1901, and display some of the differences in feminisms of the 19th century as compared to our contemporary thinking about feminist initiatives¹⁰

The newspaper *La Fronde* was also formative in providing French women with a form of representation outside of government restrictions. Founded in 1897 by Marguerite Durand, the newspaper was made up of an all-female staff. Not only was the staff all female, many of them were the first women to achieve notoriety within their chosen fields outside of the paper. Clémence Royer, for example, was the first woman to teach at the Sorbonne and Séverine, the first woman reporter, were just two of the staff producing female firsts.¹¹ Focusing on the coverage of politics, news, sports and the stock market, the newspaper did not immediately present itself as feminist; at least not in its early years.¹² Roberts notes, that “Durand’s paper was

⁸Countess Pierre Lecointre, “The State of the Feminist Question in France in 1907,” in *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque: A Historical and Literary Anthology*, ed. Jennifer Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 50-54.

⁹ Waelti-Walters and Hause, introduction, 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, 9.

neither an organ of the feminist movement nor a journal devoted to fashion and the domestic arts.”¹³ But just when women were entering the public male sphere, *La Fronde* provided an entrance for women to engage in affairs outside of the home.

While feminist views came in lots of different iterations, it is important to point out that each of these groups were devoted to giving political representation to women when the government body would not. The opening of secondary education to women and the right to divorce enacted in 1884 (which had been revoked by the Napoleonic Code in 1804) while not small reforms, were only the beginning of establishing women as more autonomous politically and paved a way for them to leave their domestic lives and become productive citizens of the state. With this in mind, I now turn to representations of women shown engaging in autonomous acts outside the authority of men.

New Womanhood in French Posters

It is at this transition that I remind the reader of the questions I posed at the beginning of this chapter: To what extent was the graphic Art Nouveau style used in representing the *Femme Nouvelle*?; How did graphic artists working in France incorporate the *Femme Nouvelle* into their work?; and How did representations of the *Femme Nouvelle* contribute to the modernization of France? Additionally, I consider the following images in terms of “sexual anarchy,” and to what extent it is displayed. Though I realize that not all posters displaying the *Femme Nouvelle* are done in the Art Nouveau style, I perpetuate that it was one of the main styles that displayed ambiguities in representation.

To begin, in fact, I have chosen a political cartoon that is not done in the Art Nouveau style, but one that shows one example through which the *Femme Nouvelle* was satirized. As

¹³ Ibid., 5.

mentioned before, the *Femme Nouvelle* remained a bane to the bourgeois male, and was often written about and satirized in papers such as the *Journal des débats*, the *Revue des deux mondes*, *La Nouvelle Revue* and *La Revue encyclopédique* as either a “plucky rebel” or “a man-hating virago.”¹⁴ In an 1896 cover of the April issue of *Le Grelot*, a Republican satirical newspaper, the perception of the *Femme Nouvelle* as perhaps this “plucky rebel” is shown (Figure A-13).

Le Grelot shows this sort of womanhood in timely fashion as Paris then was in the midst of receiving women from all over the world for an international feminist congress being held in the city.¹⁵ The caption reads, “*Je vais Congrès féministe! Tu préparearas le dîner pour huit heures précises, tu m’entends? Et surtout, que rien ne cloche!*”¹⁶ The woman, who is obviously a wife and mother, is taking off on her bicycle to go to the feminist congress. She looks back at her husband, who is slaving away over a wash bucket of dirty dishes and demands her dinner at precisely at eight and for him to “make sure nothing goes wrong.” In this deeply satirical image, the woman takes on a masculine demeanor, while her husband is in a feminized role. The woman displays many common motifs of new womanhood, but here I have chosen to focus on two: the bicycle and the cigarette, one demonstrating activity through a new technology, and the other leisure through what was then a socially taboo medium.

Before delving too far into the bicycle and cigarette, I would like to analyze this satirical representation of the *Femme Nouvelle* in terms of Gissing’s “sexual anarchy.” Was this image representing the all-out chaos that Gissing predicted? In a word: yes. While this image is clearly not one reflecting a stark reality, it situates itself in the midst of humorous depiction. Whether or

¹⁴ Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*, 6.

¹⁵ Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*, 23.

¹⁶ The caption reads, “I’m going to the Feminist Congress! You will prepare dinner for eight o’clock precisely, do you hear me? And above all, make sure nothing goes wrong!”

not women were actually reversing the roles of men and women or husband and wife within their domestic sphere as starkly as this, the expression on the husband's face suggests that what his wife is doing is rather outrageous. Here, we see the artist grappling with the woman question. The man is no longer a figure of the public sphere, as his wife is becoming through her access to independent travel through the bicycle and her attendance at the feminist conference, but he is forced into the domestic role as a housewife. Indeed, his wife is rebelling against typical gender roles at his expense. This image does the work of displaying the fears mentioned in previous sections above of an oncoming "sexual anarchy"—a period in which the world has been reversed.

Technology and the *Femme Nouvelle*

Modern woman and modern technology were often displayed together in turn-of-the-century advertisements, and two products in these advertisements were the bicycle and electrical devices. In the *Le Grelot* cover, the technological device of the bicycle is intertwined with the woman's representation as a *Femme Nouvelle*. Siân Reynolds quotes the famous Sarah Bernhardt saying in 1896, "The bicycle is on the way to transforming our way of life more deeply than you might think. All these young women and girls, who are devouring space are refusing domestic family life."¹⁷ Bernhardt's use of the expression "devouring space" provides an apt image in the face of the changing times. The proliferation of women who could not only cross the city alone but had the convenience of a speedier means of transit than walking were aspects that allowed new women the freedom of mobility that separated them all the more from the confines of the home.

¹⁷ Siân Reynolds, "Vélo-Métro-Auto: Women's Mobility in Belle Epoque Paris" in *'A Belle Epoque'? Women in French Society and Culture 1890-1914*, edited by Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarr. (New York, Berghahn Books, 2007), 85.

A poster by Theophile-Alexandre Steinlen created for the company Motorcycle Comiot offers a representation of the *Femme Nouvelle* as this woman rides her bicycle through a gaggle of geese who, with their mouths open, convey surprise (Figure A-14). While again, this representation of the new woman is not done in the Art Nouveau style, it does the work of representing a more realistic image of the *Femme Nouvelle*. In the background, two workers stare at the modern young woman as she rides past. In a comical sense, the geese convey an exaggerated reaction that the bystanders would have perhaps felt, but not have readily displayed.¹⁸ The woman appears to be in somewhat of a rural setting, with a town behind her. Here, we see her mobility as she travels from a more urban place out into the country. She is indeed, not letting anything stand in her way of freedom—not even the gaggle of geese. While this image is not as clearly anarchic as the *Le Grelot* comic, it suggests the a more autonomous role taken by the *Femme Nouvelle* as enabled through the bicycle.

Another poster, this one by Eugène Gasset, uses the bicycle as a way to direct attention to his “smartly” dressed and “self-possessed” young woman, yet another iteration of a modern woman which catered to a female clientele (Figure A-15). While the past two images have not been exemplary of the Art Nouveau style, this poster by Gasset is obviously displaying the style. In here light pink and fashionable dress, the woman stands amidst a backdrop of wavy lines, which provide a rather stylized landscape. The geometric pattern on her dress, is also indicative of the Art Nouveau style, as well as the three four-leaf clovers that she holds, providing an element of nature. Additionally, the Japanese elements mentioned in the previous chapter incorporated in the style, are there as well—unmodulated color, heavy contours, and flatness.

¹⁸ Ebria Feinblatt and Bruce Davis, *Toulouse-Lautrec and His Contemporaries: Posters of the Bell Epoque from the Wagner Collection* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1985), 65.

Thus, Gasset's image of the modern woman is undeniably Art Nouveau, a style that was both modern and traditional in the face of the changing time. With her bicycle, this modern woman, if not a *Femme Nouvelle*, is an active member of a modern France, and no longer an adornment for the home.

In advertisements like this, however, not all women are readily set realistically in the changing times. In Mucha's 1902 poster for Perfecta Cycles, a young red-headed woman leans languidly on the handle-bars of her bicycle, her hair, as seen in the Job poster previously in this chapter, floats behind her in voluminous Art Nouveau fashion (Figure A-16). Reynolds notes that, "Bicycles coincided both with Art Nouveau curlicues, and with the invention of the color litho poster... posters that encouraged not only sexual but emancipator fantasies."¹⁹ We see both artistic style and technology, the bicycle, merge together to produce a depiction of modern womanhood. However, Mucha's poster provides a more sensual representation. Where Steinlen's poster displays activity, Mucha's displays inactivity. This is not to suggest that the woman is showing passivity, but that she is there more to display a sort of dreamy depiction of new womanhood that may not have been as challenging to the male gaze. Mucha's figure does not look rooted in a reality, but rather draws upon a classical aesthetic that suggests a demure mystery, as is present in the other examples I have given in previous chapters. The *Femme Nouvelle*, here, is not unapproachable or displaying masculine fears, but invites the viewer in, as the poster of Bernhardt does, to observe her and her magnificent bicycle. While the *Le Grelot* cover and the Steinlin poster portray new womanhood in comical ways, the Mucha stands as an alluring attempt to get both women and men on board, suggesting that modernity is not something to be feared but embraced.

¹⁹ Reynolds, "Women's Mobility," 85.

Also showing the Art Nouveau style, I turn to another poster done by Henri Thiret done for John Griffiths bicycles from 1898 (Figure A-17). Much like the Mucha, the woman and her bicycle are made up of dozens of curving lines from the shape of her body to her flowing hair. She is placed amidst the backdrop of a natural scene of trees and a patch of green grass. The extent to which this poster shows the woman on the bicycle as a *Femme Nouvelle* remains debatable, as she is clearly an object meant to be looked at for beauty, however, she is using the bicycle as a means of independent transport. In the lower right-hand corner, an older woman sits in a blue cloak, her staff resting on her shoulder. Clearly showing her age through the curved, brown, and dead thistles around her, Thiret shows her looking off into the distance—perhaps as a foil to the younger woman. In this poster, it is clear that the younger woman is being placed in a narrative or sorts next to the older one. It is the natural elements of the white roses, full of life, that starkly juxtapose the lifelessness of the brown thistles. Here again, natural motifs take prominence in the Art Nouveau style, while showing a narrative different from the other posters I have discussed.

Woman's connection to newly adopted electrical devices is also of interest in exploring the new woman's connection to technology and byway modernity. This is predominately seen in the work of Jules Chéret who uses women, in decorative fashion, to compliment lamps and telephones. The lightbulb, invented in 1879 and the telephone, invented in 1876 were the beginning of electrical devices in many public spaces and homes during the nineteenth century. With these new ways of harnessing electricity came other types of electrical devices—an important one was the théâtrophone. This device is seen in Chéret's 1890 poster advertising the device (Figure A-18). Often installed in hotels, cafes, clubs, and even available by subscription for in home use, one could listen to complete operas using the same technology that a regular

telephone used by simply inserting a coin.²⁰ The woman, dressed in a yellow evening gown that could have been worn to the theatre itself, leans forward with the théâtrophone to her ear. She smiles in delight as her eyes drift to the side. She is the start of a line of other fashionably dresses people, a man with a top hat and two ladies, waiting to partake in this wonderful new device.

While Chéret, “king of the poster,” is of an older generation than Gasset or Mucha, his posters still display an Art Nouveau style, which is a common feature of displaying Modern women and by extension the *Femme Nouvelle*.²¹ In the théâtrophone poster, Chéret uses the lithograph form, which he developed, as essential to the Art Nouveau poster. This is largely seen through his use of the color yellow for the women’s dress as contrasted by the darker blue background. Again, this flatness of color translates well into an analysis of Japanese influence on the Art Nouveau poster. However, while Gasset and Mucha adorn their figures with curvilinear patterns and geometric shapes, Chéret’s lines are rather ridged in comparison. This is especially clear through the lines which make up the woman’s dress, giving it somewhat of a crinkled feeling.

Why would Chéret have chosen this woman, say rather than the man standing behind her, to introduce this new contraption to the public? Wouldn’t electrical devices like this have seemed too complicated for woman’s use? While many advertisements for automobiles suggested that they were so easy to use a woman could drive them, technology was often thought of as too complicated for women to operate. Perhaps not. Chéret’s use of a fashionable woman suggests the *Femme Nouvelle* as an operator of technology, which I argue is an aspect of the new woman. In Chéret’s poster, the woman doesn’t need any assistance in using the théâtrophone. She is

²⁰ Feinblatt and Davis, *Toulouse-Lautrec*, 36.

²¹ Bradford R. Collins, “The Poster as Art: Jules Chéret and the Struggle for the Equality of the Arts in Nineteenth-Century France,” *Design Issue* 2, no. 1 (1985): 49.

partaking in enjoyment without regard toward her husband or the domestic sphere. In these representations of new womanhood, it is important to notice the active nature iterated in each. With the exception of the Mucha, as it shows a woman of controversial conception, all of these women are making their own decisions, and maintaining their own autonomy in a world of emerging invention. Whether through the technology of the bicycle or the théâtrophone, women have become deeply entangled in the changing of the times—modern mavericks of the new era.

Leisure and the *Femme Nouvelle*

Returning to the *Le Grelot* cover, I want to address other aspects of new womanhood I mentioned earlier having to do with leisure: the cigarette in the woman's mouth. It only adds to the crass nature of her voice as presented through the caption. Why, in between her lips, does the cigarette hold more weight? New Women were associated with leisure—I argue both as fictive agents in advertisements for products associated with cigarettes and alcoholic beverages as well as in the public sphere of bars and clubs. Through these representations, new women were, yet again, shown exercising their own form of independence.

Delores Mitchell writes, “cigars, cigarettes, and pipes often served as attributes of masculine power in 19th-century art. Women smokers were rarely depicted and then usually “outsiders”—actresses, prostitutes, lesbians, degenerate society women, or “new women” for whom cigarettes symbolized deviance.”²² Indeed, women, like the one in *Le Grelot*, were cast as “outsiders” for smoking and drinking when they weren't supposed to be taking part in this activity at all, especially in the public arena. However, it seems applicable to ask where were they smoking and with whom were they smoking? The answer lies in two words: bars and men.

²² Delores Mitchell, “The ‘New Woman’ Prometheus: Women Artists Depict Women Smoking,” *Women's Art Journal*, 12, no. 1 (1991): 3.

In the context of male leisure, I posit that by the new women entering into the male activities of smoking and drinking in clubs and bars, they were subverting what was known as “Clubland,” or male communities formed of bachelors and married men who retreated from their wives and children to spend most of their time as if they were bachelors.²³ Smoking and drinking were a large part of these male cultures, in which after dinner, men would withdraw with other men into smoking rooms.²⁴ In a poster by Lautrec for the magazine American magazine *The Chap Book*, he illustrates a scene at an Irish and American bar in Paris exemplifying this culture. In the poster, the men wear top hats and converse as the bartender mixes a drink in a cocktail shaker (Figure A-19).

It is not uncommon for advertisement, such as those for JOB cigarette papers, to portray fantasies of sexualized women. Could images like this be seen as displaying characteristics of new womanhood? Yes and no. For instance, in another one of Mucha’s advertisement for JOB, a woman sits similarly to his poster previously mentioned in Chapter two, with her right hand lifted holding a lit cigarette (Figure A-20). Except in this image, the woman closes her eyes with her head tilted back in a tobacco-induced bliss. Rather than reading the paper-like smoke as a reminder of the product the ad is selling, I will focus on its sexual connotations. Mitchell writes of how producers of erotica “emphasized the phallic nature of smoking projectiles.” With this in mind, the cigarette takes on usual phallic characteristics, while the smoke is reminiscent of climax, snaking away into the background in her unending pleasure. In this image, sexual connotations are more present than in the previous Mucha JOB poster, due to the woman’s face lost in pleasure. Mucha has coopted the masculinity of smoking into a sexy woman. While

²³ Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, 11.

²⁴ Mitchell, “The ‘New Woman’ Prometheus,” 3.

perhaps the woman takes on new womanhood because of the act of smoking, this conclusion is only made more ambiguous by the ads overtly sexual connotations. Even in other JOB advertisements, such as the one by Georges Meunier from 1984, the woman is posed similarly. Again, she can be read in a similar sexual way and is even more overt than Mucha's figure by her bare chest, which is strategically blocked by her right arm and her attention to a cat—a French reference to prostitution (Figure A-21). For these images, I claim aspects of the *Femme Nouvelle* for their rebellious act of smoking, as she is taking a traditionally masculine activity and using it for her own pleasure, and even sexual liberation.

However, these two representations of women, clearly directed toward male viewers, do not stand for all representations of women smoking. For instance, in a poster by Jane Atché new womanhood is displayed in a less sexual way. A student of Mucha's, Atché was one of the first and only female poster artists. In her JOB poster from 1889, she presents a woman who is in “full command of herself” (Figure A-22).²⁵ Still positioned in the same way as all of the women in the previous JOB advertisements, she stands alone in the defiant attitude her portrait gives off. Shrouded in a black cloak, which takes up nearly a fourth of the page, its high collar suggests the woman is in a private moment removed from men. This is clearly a new woman rebelling against the patriarchal conditions of the day. Was Jane Atché too rebelling against her teacher's example in order to portray her own autonomy? We cannot know for sure, but her work stands as a prominent image of defiance of the norms.

Toulouse-Lautrec displays women in the cafés of Montmartre, a seedy part of Paris not frequented by the bourgeoisie. Returning to Lautrec's *Divan Japonais* poster, this poster

²⁵ Jeannine Falino, *L'Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), 30.

advertises one of the café-concert commonly shown in Montmartre. He pictures Jane Avril, a performer and Toulouse-Lautrec's close friend, as a spectator. Sitting next her is a coupe glass from which she is presumably consuming an alcoholic beverage. Avril, who was not only a performer but active in the intellectual and literary circles of Montmartre, clearly displays the new woman's penchant for not only showing up in male-dominated places, but for partaking in activities, such as drinking and intellectual discussions, that were traditionally exclusively male.

These images of women participating in the male activities of smoking and drinking were certainly factors of "sexual anarchy" to men who felt they were encroaching on their sacred "Clubland." The sexualizing of the Mucha and Meunier posters remains a safe place for which men can ease into images of women partaking in such scandalous activities as smoking. However, underneath their sexualized characteristics, the women in the Mucha and Meunier women have taken the male activity of smoking for themselves, not men. Atché, on the other hand, is clearly not pandering to a male gaze as she portrays her women less sexualized. This image of a woman smoking, I argue, is even more of a "sexual anarchy" as the woman is completely covered, even wearing a high-necked dress, does not display the same femininity as the Mucha and Meunier women. Atché's woman is not demure but collected and independent. Lastly, Jane Avril in Toulouse-Lautrec's work displays an actual reality of a contemporary of the time *Femme Nouvelle*. Avril is actively participating in male "Clubland" not in the vague frame of an advertisement, like the women in the JOB posters, but in an actual place. Her image, I argue, would have been a sign of "sexual anarchy" during the time, however, she, like all the women I have looked at were simply pushing boundaries in order to form more equal sexual roles.

Providing two specific tropes of the new woman, the 1896 cover of *Le Grelot* stands to

represent critiques and displays of new women stereotypes. New woman refused to be confined to traditional domestic spheres, and her insistence on movement from a confining domicile existence, to one of activity and freedom. I have expressed how both the technological advances, such as the bicycle and théâtrophone, and leisure activities, such as smoking and drinking, have contributed to both the new woman's mobility and liberty. These varying representations of new womanhood stand as influential catalyst for women all around the world to begin embracing modern values and lifestyle. In the next chapter, I will elaborate further on this in the Japanese context.

Conclusion

I will now answer the three main questions posed at the beginning of this chapter more directly in order to provide a sound conclusion. The first question I asked was: To what extent was the graphic Art Nouveau style used in representing the *Femme Nouvelle*? Having addressed these multiple times throughout my examples, it is clear that the Art Nouveau style is used widely in depictions of women containing characteristics of the *Femme Nouvelle*. However, while not all of my examples display this style (such as in the *Le Grelot* comic and the Steinlen poster), the majority of my examples either display all or a combination of curvilinear lines, geometric patterns, and natural motifs allowing for the claim that the Art Nouveau style is prominent when display modern women. Additionally, aspects of *japonisme*, or the influence of Japanese art on European art, is present in many French posters, as they often display unmodulated color, flatness, and heavy contours.

Secondly, I asked: How did graphic artists working in France incorporate the *Femme Nouvelle* into their work? Through this chapter, I have proven that the aspects of the *Femme Nouvelle* can be seen in turn of the twentieth century French posters through their interacting with both the technologies of the bicycle and electrical devices like the théâtrophone, as well as

through the traditionally male leisure activities of smoking and drinking. In regards of depiction, some graphic artists, such as Mucha, often portray women acting in progressive ways, yet displaying themselves in sexual or objectified ways. This complicates questions regarding representations of the *Femme Nouvelle* in French poster. While, I argue that all of these posters display modern women with aspects of the *Femme Nouvelle*, not all of them necessarily belong under that title, such as those of the women smoking by Mucha and Menier. However, with the exception of these two posters, I argue that all of my examples display active *Femme Nouvelles*.

Lastly, I will address my third question: How did representations of the *Femme Nouvelle* contribute to the modernization of France? Through women interacting with modern technologies such as the bicycle and electrical devices like the théâtrophone—characteristics of modernity in and of themselves—they are linked with being modern. However, it is not simply this linkage, but these devices paired with their social contexts that make the women using them modern and by extensions *Femme Nouvelles*. For instance, women riding a bicycle were considered scandalous, as they would have to straddle the seat to ride. The clothing worn by women while riding the bicycle, (often a nineteenth century style of pants referred to as knickerbockers, but still many wore skirts) was also scandalous, as well. Women choosing to wear more sensible clothing for riding displayed a rebellion against gender structures requiring women to wear skirts. Additionally, the bicycle allowed for more independent mobility away from public transportation and the escort of men. The théâtrophone, which was boasted as being easy to use, also showed women progressively using technology—something was no longer restricted to men.

Aside from technologies, which were inherently modern, women's choice to participate in the male-dominated leisure activities of smoking and drinking allowed women access to male

intellectual circles and the “Clubland” which, before this time period, had been exclusive male. Women possession of the male activities of smoking and drinking presented them on the same level as men, which enabled a more equality between the genders. In an ever-changing world, the *Femme Nouvelle* stood as someone to be considered within graphic representation for her rebellious and revolutionary depictions.

CHAPTER 4
PROBLEM WOMEN: REPRESENTATIONS OF THE JAPANESE *ATARASHII ONNA*

I am a New Woman. I am the sun. I am simply a person. At least, everyday I strive
to be the being I want to be.

Hiratsuka Raicho¹
Atarashii Onna

The above quote is taken from an essay by Hiratsuka Raicho, one of the founders of the Japanese feminist magazine *Seito*. Originally published in a 1911 issue of *Chuo Koron*, Raicho states, “I am a New Woman,” or an *atarashii onna* in Japanese. She is proudly claiming her identity, along with the rest of the women in *Seito*, as a woman against convention. This move was largely anarchical in the eyes of much of the Japanese press, and *Seito* women were often derided for wearing Western clothes, spending time with men in public, and visiting geisha houses.² In the press, New Woman had become a pejorative term, but one which some *Seito* women were beginning to declaim. However, Raicho claimed New Woman as the title of her essay working to redefine what being a New Woman meant to her personally. It is in the above quote that we see Raicho acknowledging a state of flux. She writes, “everyday I strive to be the being I want to be,” emphasizing the unfinished work that women must diligently do to achieve an ideal world of gender equality.

While Raicho is speaking of the work New Women must do, her statements about “striving to be” can also be applied to the transitory state Japan is going through during the Meiji period, a time of vigorous modernization for the country. In this chapter, I examine the social exchange of New Womanhood from France to Japan, and how both this exchange and movement figured within the Japanese graphic arts. I will precede my analysis of images with background

¹ Hiratsuka Raicho, “Atarashii Onna,” *Chuo Koron* (1913): 193.

² Pauline C. Reich and Atsuko Fukuda, “Japan's Literary Feminists: The “Seito” Group,” *Signs* 2, no. 1 (1976) 284.

on the Meiji period, including its artistic makeup and women's social roles, along with a discussion of *ekanban*, a transitional poster medium that was common during the late Edo and the early Meiji Period. I will then transition into looking at *Bijin-ga* prints, or “Beauty Person pictures” as a means of displaying characteristics of New Womanhood. In many department store advertisements, these pictures display women in a traditional styles, yet also present them as modern and Western through their actions or artistic styles.

The Meiji Era: Transition, Art, and Women

The Meiji Period in Japan was bound by imminent change—however, this change was not necessarily dictated by the coming century, but came out of the feudal country's need to modernize. This modernization was not based purely on Western influence, as is sometimes thought, but a combination that was rooted in contemporary practices taken from the West along with extreme Japanese nationalism. Though not often included in accounts of the period, women played a vital role in pushing Meiji government aims to both remain true to their Japanese roots while also establishing what were thought to be enlightened Western sensibilities. In this section, I will provide a background on the Meiji Era, Western artistic influence on Japan and how Japanese women were being used to instill national identity.

To understand the emergence of the Meiji period, one must look about 15 years prior to its beginning. Until 1854, Japan had remained largely isolated from the outside world, with the exception of trade with China and Holland through the port of Nagasaki. Due to this isolation, there was a flourishing of distinctively Japanese art and culture which produced such artistic works as *ukiyo-e* prints and *rinpa*, or a type of painting often designated for the wealthy, along with lacquerwares and poetry.³ However, due to Commodore Perry's demands in 1854, the

³ Thornton, *Japanese Graphic Design*, 22.

Tokugawa shogunate was forced to end this isolation by signing the Treaty of Kanagawa which opened multiple ports on Japanese shores to the West. This enabled artworks, like the ones listed above, to be shipped to Europe. This transfer of goods influenced artists like Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and even art dealers like Sigfried Bing, to feed their passion for Japanese arts. Being a feudal military-based government, the Tokugawa shogunate was no match for modern Western military warfare. The Tokugawa shogunate, the governing body at the time, was unable to deal adequately with this new influx of trade and could not protect Japan from threats on its sovereignty.⁴ Many citizens were opposed to opening Japan's shores to any foreign countries and began pushing for the Emperor Meiji to take power.⁵ Therefore, in 1868, the Tokugawa were toppled and Emperor Meiji became the governmental leader in Japan. As a result, the capital city's name was changed from Edo to Tokyo, and thus the Meiji Restoration began. In the years to come, the Meiji Restoration was to establish the footholds that allowed Japan's economy to grow into a world power. Once Meiji was put in power, anti-foreignism slowly went away and bred new revolutionary zeal for Western culture—a Western culture that was not exclusively concerned with goods but fostered social customs and artistic influence.

Western Influence on Japanese Art Schools

During the Meiji period, there was also a massive amount of Western influence on artistic styles and practices. According to art historian Shuji Takashina, the first two-thirds of the Meiji periods spanning from 1868-1896 can be divided up into two artistic periods. The first, spanning from 1868-1882, was largely dominated by Western ideology and the government's aim for "civilization and enlightenment," in which traditional Japanese art was pushed aside in favor of

⁴ Julia Sapin, "Merchandising Art and Identity in Meiji Japan: Kyoto Nihonga Artists' for Takashimaya Department Store, 1868-1912," *Journal of Design History* 17, no. 4 (2004): 318.

⁵ Thornton, *Japanese Graphic Design*, 28.

following what was thought to be a superior Western model. The second, however, spanning from 1882-1896, was largely a backlash against “blind Westernization,” and chose to push for bringing back Japanese traditional art, such as the painting style known as *nihonga*. With these two distinct periods came two distinct Japanese arts schools which determined the painting practices of the day: the *Kobu bijitsu gakko* (Technical Art School) in the first period and the *Tokyo bijustu gakko* (Tokyo School of Fine Arts) in the second.⁶

The painting practiced at the Technical Art School was largely referred to as *yoga*, or Western-style painting, and was taught by European professors such as Antonio Fontanesi, an Italian artist. Here, artists wished to depict the visual world by using Western techniques such as *chiaroscuro* to show depth and solidity, differing from the two-dimensionality that characterized traditional Japanese art. Takashina writes of the Western technique that Japanese *yoga* artists worked to master, explaining, “Such pictorial techniques were grounded in classical aesthetic principles. But Japan’s *yoga* movement displayed no interest in the aesthetic underpinnings of Western art; it focused only on the techniques to which those principles had given rise.”⁷ This lack of interest in the theory behind artistic concepts was a symptom of a larger governmental aim. The Technical Art School was the first government-run art school in Japan, and its approach to art was more technical than artistic. In fact, its placement as a part of the Imperial College of Technology suggested that it was contributing to aims for industrialization, as it stood alongside schools of engineering, architecture, and chemistry. In this context, art was no longer meant to

⁶ Shuji Takashina, “Eastern and Western Dynamics in the Development of Western-Style Oil Painting During the Meiji Era,” in *Paris in Japan: The Japanese Encounter with European Painting* (St. Louis: Washington University, 1987) 22.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

just please the eye, but was as a sign of progress for the Japanese government in their quest for modernization.

In 1883 the Technical Art School was closed due to a change in government ideology. No longer did the Meiji regime take on Westernization as a means for industrialization, but it began to revitalize Japanese traditions in order to boost nationalism. Thus, a new art school was established in reaction to this governmental shift: the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. The school was a proponent of traditional Japanese art, however, it did not mean to merely replicate it, but to make Japanese art modern, in much the same way as the conservative members of the Art Nouveau movement in France. In 1887, the school was founded by the American Ernest Fenollosa who had originally come to Japan to teach political science. However, Fenollosa was also trained in oil painting and drawing and worked with artist Takahashi Yuichi to grow Western-style painting in Japan. Though the two had hoped to hold lectures and programs on the subject, their plans were never achieved and Fenollosa decided to spend his time focusing on *nihonga* instead. Through Fenollosa's realization of *nihonga*, he established himself as a proponent of the traditional arts and met other like-minded individuals such as Okakura Kakuzo who helped him found the Tokyo School of Fine Arts.⁸

While the proliferation of and shift between each school largely outlines the Japanese incorporation of Western artistic styles into their established art practices, this has often been focused on through the lens of painting. However, these transitions are also important in the adoption of Western graphic styles into Japanese design, as well. For instance, by 1901 the Tokyo School of Fine Art had established new departments for architecture and design, suggesting its importance. Additionally, the Kansai Painting School was founded in 1905, as

⁸ Takashina, "Eastern and Western," 25.

well as the Kyoto Painting School in 1909. Furthermore, Wasada University organized the “Society for the Study of Advertisements” in 1914. Through all of these schools and organizations, Japanese graphic arts were formed out of Western concepts to shape modern Japanese design.

“Good Wife, Wise Mother”: Women’s Social Roles

Western influence was also exchanged socially as well. Specifically, the roles of women in Meiji Japan were beginning to change with the times, allowing women a more vital role in the government’s aims for modernization. During the Meiji period women were not formally allowed to be a part of politics at all and were expected to perform the “feminine ideal of “good wife, wise mother”—a political act in and of itself, as Japanese women were expected to raise good citizens for the state. While women gained more access to education, they were also bound by ideas that this education would be used to better their children—the future citizens of Japan. Lowy writes, “Much like the Republican Mother . . . , the Japanese “good wife, wise mother” publically served her nation through her private—and now respected—roles within the family.”⁹ The idea of Republican motherhood was especially prevalent after the French Revolution, and provided women with an essential role within France.

In Japan, the “good wife” portion of the ideal was derived from Confucian belief often held during feudal Japan, the “wise mother” was a modern Western idea. The first concept, the Confucian “good wife” was the “obedient wife and daughter-in-law responsible for the smooth running of the household” however, she was “mentally unfit to exercise responsibility for child-rearing.”¹⁰ The Western “wise mother” ideology, by contrast, conceded that “a woman should

⁹ Lowy, *The Japanese “New Woman,”* 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

receive a well-rounded education so that she could raise children properly and interact comfortably with her educated male counterparts.” By combining both traditional and contemporary ideas, the Meiji period produced women who were educated to progress beyond domestic life, yet subsumed into roles of subservience based on outdated beliefs and national obligation, making an independent and autonomous life unattainable.

While the Meiji Constitution of 1889 and the Meiji Civil Code of 1898 were introduced to help modernize Japan, and distance it from its previously feudal state, these did little to change women’s limited access to “legal, political and social security.”¹¹ Thus, while we find that under early Meiji Japan women’s voices were still restricted, it is important to recognize that during the early 20th century, Japanese women were beginning to find outlets to voice their opinions. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, it was near the end of the Meiji period that a group of women gathered in Tokyo to form the organization the *Seitoshu* and began writing the feminist journal *Seito*.¹² This journal was similar to feminist newspapers such as *La Fronde* in France which had an entirely female staff, and often commented on women’s issues, though did not out rightly identify as feminist. Thus, we find here Japanese women beginning to take on new conceptions of womanhood beyond that dictated by their culture.

Ekanban

I now turn to a style from the late Edo and Early Meiji periods, called *ekanban*, as a way of displaying a traditional womanhood within a graphic medium. *Ekanban* were “advertisements with pictures and letters painted on paper or cloth.”¹³ This was the printing process used in late

¹¹ Mara Patessio, *Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan: The Development of the Feminist Movement* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2011), 2.

¹² Lowy, *The Japanese “New Woman”*

¹³ Thornton, *Japanese Graphic Design*, 2.

19th century Japan before lithography was taken up in the early 20th century and was continually used to portray women in traditional ways. Thus, *ekanban* stands as a good example of how women were represented throughout Japan prior to the emergence of the New Woman. Let us look at an early advertisement from 1860 (Figure A-23).

This *ekanban* is an advertisement for perfume done by the artist Kunisada. A woman's image appears in the reflection of a hand mirror. However, in the poster, the mirror is not held by anyone, but balances on its handle, tilting upward as if it were in use. The woman appears to be at her toilette as the image displays her robe held loosely onto her right shoulder while it is not even visible on the left. Her right arm is positioned across herself with her fingers on the back of her neck. However, while she is in a relative state of undress, her hair is perfectly pinned and pulled back, even ornamented with an elaborate clip. Her face is clearly made up as well, as her lips are bright red suggesting that she is wearing lipstick, and her skin is especially pale with powder. The woman also holds another hand mirror behind her head. However, this is relatively difficult to see at a first glance, as the frame of the main hand mirror cuts off her arm, which must be extended upward, and only shows her thumb and a little of her index finger grasping the other mirror's handle. This detail is significant though, as it displays her applying the product the ad is selling, the perfume. However, as this is an early version of *bejin-ga*, or beauty pictures, the product is perhaps meant to stand in the background, and pales in comparison to the women's traditional beauty.

Ekanban such as this clearly spoke to Silverman's point about women being ornaments for the home, or perhaps in this case the court, in a Japanese context. Perhaps advertisements like this were not just meant to be sexualized images of a woman at their toilette, but also ones meant for the eyes of women as well. The advertising copy suggests this, saying that the perfume "will

increase the wearer's sexual attraction to men."¹⁴ Thus, Kunisada, along with the perfume company, must clearly be thinking of women as their primary target for this product; if not men buying the product for women.

The Woman Problem and the Emergence of the *Atarashii Onna*

The question of women's roles within society was also going on in Japan, as it was in France. However, in Japan this debate was not titled "The Woman Question," but more dauntingly "The Woman Problem." Virtually identical to the woman question, Lowry explains that the woman problem was a "debate in the government, schools, and media over the proper role of women in the family and in society."¹⁵ The *Seitoshu* were active commentators in this debate and, while all of the members did not see exactly eye to eye, they pushed for women to maintain "strength, independence, and self-awareness" in order to form "individuals who functioned within a community, not one who was subordinate to it."¹⁶ However, this agenda was often opposed with the belief held by others that women's place in the home were essential to achieving a modern Japan. While women were meant to stay informed of modern trends, such as new womanhood, this did not mean that they were meant to follow them. In essence, women were told by the government that staying at home would make them happier because they could create relationships with their families rather than searching for independence.¹⁷

While much of this debate was similar in France, I ask what made it a "problem" rather than a "question" in Japan? According to feminist scholar Midori Wakakuwa, "patriarchal power

¹⁴ *Japanese Graphic Arts*. 29

¹⁵ Lowry, *The Japanese "New Woman,"* 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

has always had a more pervasive and persistent influence on every aspect of society in Japan.” Indeed, Japan’s years of isolation from the outside world during the Edo period had left the nation severely out-of-date on modern European philosophies. Additionally, the established feudal system was based on patriarchal values that were essential to its livelihood, making debates about gender roles impossible. This was not helped by Confucian ideology either, which was built on hierarchal structures and, even in the Meiji Period, still relied upon for the concept of the “good mother.” By contrast, the Woman Question in the West was enabled by a contemporary current of humanistic thought. Humanistic thought was grounded in “dignity and freedom” which allowed for the concept of equality between human beings—this including women, despite its lack of practice in real society.¹⁸ While Japanese society had not been confronted with Western thoughts on gender during the Edo period, no longer were they able to ignore women’s changing views on their own positions.

Aspects of New Womanhood in Japanese Graphics

With this historical and artistic background established for the Meiji period, I can now turn to a discussion on representation of the Japanese New Woman. While many images of New Womanhood were emerging around the 1890’s in France, similar images in Japan began surfacing some 10 years later. Just as the first issue of the *Seito* launched in 1911, so too were images of progressive women surfacing around the early 20th century near the end of the Meiji Period. While is not difficult to find images of New Women after 1914, it is more difficult to find them during the later years of the Meiji period, and thus I will examine how these earlier

¹⁸ Midori Wakakuwa, “Three Women Artists of the Meiji Period (1868-1912): Reconsidering Their Significance from a Feminist Perspective,” trans. Naoko Aoki, in *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow and Atsuko Kameda (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1995), 62.

images, though they may appear conservative, display changing ideas that align with New Womanhood.

I ask here, did images of women in the graphic arts show representations similarly in Japan, as they did in Europe, and were images of New Womanhood the same? Here, I am especially interested in *bijin-ga* prints, or “beauty person pictures” usually of women in traditional Japanese clothing, and their prominence in Japanese graphic culture. Meiji *bijin-ga* prints often incorporated the colorful Western Art Nouveau style into its advertisements and this can be seen throughout advertisements for many department stores. Furthermore, beer advertisements at this time period are also prevalent in Japan at the beginning of the 20th century, and display a similar sense of autonomy to French women, such as Jane Avril, consuming alcohol. It is important I focus on the use of *bijin-ga* prints rather than *ukiyo-e*, as *ukiyo-e* were associated with the Edo period, a time Japan was working to get away from. Thus, though derived from *ukiyo-e*, *bijin-ga* prints displayed a modern Japan, often incorporating new printing techniques and Western artistry by adding more realistic elements to traditional subject matter.

Department Store *Bijin-Ga*

While there are many depictions of French women consuming products in a department store setting, these images are not necessarily charged with the same kinds of meanings as ones that are displayed within Japan. By the early 20th century, the Japanese department store had become a symbol of Japan’s growing economic engagement with the outside world. No longer were Japanese stores confined to small individualized shops but expanded their merchandising to European items such as parasols, tablecloths, and tapestries. Department stores like the Takashimaya Department Store in Kyoto began using European techniques that they had observed at international expositions. Show windows, glass display cases, and mannequins were all newly incorporated into stores to allow for higher product visibility. As in Europe, department

stores began to hire artists to create items to decorate the stores.¹⁹ These department stores even hired *yoga* artists, as well, “to create billboards, posters, flyers and publicity magazines to advertise domestic products.”²⁰ In many of these materials, women are a prime symbol of “tradition and taste.”²¹ As Thornton noted, “A pretty female figure has always been a useful poster standby in the West; and the same is true in Japan.”²² Thus, Japan was no exception to displaying women within their advertising materials.

Two examples of modern women displaying characteristics of New Womanhood are to be found in posters done for the Mitsukoshi Department Store by Goyo Hashiguchi and Hisui Sugiura. Let’s begin with the older poster by Hashiguchi from 1907 (Figure A-24). In her navy-blue kimono, a traditional color for Japanese textiles, a woman sits holding a book of Edo *ukiyo-e* prints in her lap. However, while the kimono is in a traditional color, it is important to note the contrast between it and the Edo period ones displayed in the book and her own. The woman’s kimono is in very modern fashion. Hashiguchi angles her body with her right shoulder appearing closer to the viewer. Her head is also turned, as well, looking at the viewer. This is uncommon in many other prints, as the figures eyes are normally directed off to the side. This direct gaze does not display passivity, and suggests that that the woman is one who holds values of the *Atarashii Onna*. Behind her, the ornate golden bench she sits on is visible as well as the red wall behind it, contrasting the gold bench dramatically. Above the wall a tree with pink flowers blooms behind the woman’s head, and name of Mitsukoshi Department Store appears to the right of her head.

¹⁹ Sapin, “Merchandising Art and Identity,” 318. For instance, the Mitsukoshi department store in Tokyo “opened a design studio in 1895 and the store employed students as well as graduates of the *nihonga* section of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts.”

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 319.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 330.

²² Thornton, *Japanese Graphic Arts*, 36.

The Western influence in this print is particularly clear through the colors, design and the depth depicted. Bright and contrasting, the colors of the poster are clearly taken from the Art Nouveau movement, especially that of the gold background, which was also common in Japanese *rinpa* painting. The design dominated by florals, again suggests influence of Art Nouveau. The lines which mark the seams of the shoulders of the kimono are curved, the tugging of the material above the obi, and the slight shadow beneath the woman's chin and eyes suggests a more realistic rendering. Compare this to the *ekanban* introduced earlier in the chapter and you have images that are compositionally different entirely. However, it is the contrast between old and new that is particularly prevalent in this image. While Hashiguchi clearly displays Western influence, he applies it to traditional imagery. It is Hashiguchi's adoption of Art Nouveau characteristics that suggests the circular relationship between France and Japan, yet again. In essence, the woman is looking at the style which inspired her style. By Hashiguchi's use of the modern Art Nouveau, the woman in the poster is clearly modern, denoting her as a New Woman.

While the woman would be considered relatively conservative by the standards of the French *Femme Nouvelle*, this poster clearly displays aspects of modernity away from the traditional meek and quiet Japanese woman. For instance, the woman looks directly at her viewer. Though subtle, she works to incorporate her gaze, compiling a dichotomy of gazes between her and the consumer. This is certainly not a meek move. Equally as important, her gaze attracts attention away from the traditional role of the women, as seen in the court, and to the viewer to look into her face. Her left hand could equally be read in the act of closing the book of Edo prints. These are all subtle ways of suggesting that this woman is no longer in a weakened position, as those women of the Edo court, but that she has the ability to assert her gaze and her

opinion. By this very act, this new woman in this poster is closing the book on her past, in order to gaze confidently into her future.

A later poster done by Hisui Sugiura for the Mitsukoshi Department Store in 1914, displays an even more apparent connection with the Art Nouveau style (Figure A-25). In this print, a woman sits in a similar pose as the woman in the Hashiguchi print, however, this woman is angled the opposite way, and holds a Mitsukoshi catalogue in her hand rather than a book of Edo *ukiyo-e* prints. As Thornton expresses, she wears “a distinctly Art Nouveau kimono [that] blends with the patterns on the cushions, upholstery and wallpaper.”²³ In this poster a merging of styles is seen. However, in this particular print, the woman displays an interest in Western décor, as opposed to the woman in the Hashiguchi print, as she has decorated her home with a European print on her wall. This print is juxtaposed on the opposite side of the wall with the name of the distinctively Japanese Mitsukoshi department store name.

The European print on the wall of the Japanese woman’s home may suggest that the woman is in touch with the political debates about the Woman Problem going on in Japan (Figure A-26). Perhaps the European print is not just there as a decoration of her home, but one that suggests her viewpoint as an *Atarashii Onna*. After all, the print is of a woman, standing on what appears to be a river bank with a modern industrial city behind her. The woman is also wearing what appears to be an Art Nouveau style dress, as well, complete with long, vertical, undulating lines, which curl at the ends. Could this be a signification of the Japanese woman’s alignment with New Womanhood? Yes. Because she is taking up the modern Art Nouveau style, it clear that she is a modern woman—and by extension a New Woman.

²³ Thornton, *Japanese Graphic Arts*, 35.

Beer *Bejin-ga*

While it is less common to find Meiji Japanese women smoking in posters than in France, it is quite common for Meiji women to be posed with beer in many advertisements. Perhaps here, a link can be made between advertisements for JOB cigarettes or even images of Jane Avril drinking in bars. However, in these Japanese iterations, women are not necessarily seen directly drinking, as Mucha and Cheret's women are smoking, but more merely handling the product or merely posed by it all together.

Take for instance, in an advertisement from 1912 for the Dai Nippon Brewery Company by an unknown artist: two kimono-clad Japanese women lean outside of a train car window (Figure A-27). The woman in the front, who appears in a navy colored kimono, with a richly patterned obi casually gestures toward a basket tray of beers directly out the window. The tray is attached to red strap which is presumably strapped to the seller, who is out of view but made known through the small piece of apron exposed at the bottom left corner of the poster. A second woman, who appears slightly younger than the woman in the front and in an even more richly patterned kimono, looks over the first woman's shoulder. However, each wear a detached and dead gaze, neither looking directly at the beers, nor at anything seemingly in the distance. While this is not necessarily characteristic of new womanhood, other aspects of the picture suggest that these women are participating as modern, new women in Japanese society. For instance, behind them is a tall industrial smokestack along with other industrial buildings from what perhaps may be a reference to the Dai Nippon Brewery or more broadly Japan's expansive commerce during the period.

This advertisement is interesting for two reasons: 1) because the first woman is supposedly reaching for a beer and 2) because the two women are on a train. Each of these aspects suggest progressive womanhood, as similar to the French *Femme Nouvelle*. The

woman's ability to drink in such a public place as a train suggests a certain autonomy. They are not in the company of men, nor are they even in a bar. However, while the first woman's hand appears to be reaching for a beer, its positioning is rather ambiguous. Her palm is turned upward, almost in a gesturing position, her middle fingers curled more tightly in than her exterior ones. Is she actually taking a beer, or merely just pointing it out? Secondly, the women's ability to travel alone together, on their own without a man shows independence, as well. In an age of growing technology, train travel was a modern way to get around. Thus, more than either of the Mitsukoshi advertisements, these women are not merely fashionable, but display real signs of new womanhood, and thus are themselves new women.

Another image of a woman with a beer in a Kirin Beer advertisement by Hokuu Tada from 1917 is also relevant (Figure A-28). As previously stated, while women were common accompaniment to bottles of beer in advertisements, it was uncommon for them to be rendered as partaking in the actual drinking of it. In the Kirin advertisement, however, the woman is leaning over what appears to be a bar. Many unopened bottles of Kirin beer appear in front of her. Instead of portraying her straight on or at a slight angle, Tada draws her in profile. In her hand, she holds an overflowing glass of golden beer up in front of her face. The woman smiles, a feature more common in Japanese advertising outside of the Meiji period. Here, as opposed to the Dai Nippon advertisement, it is rather obvious that the woman is about to partake in enjoying her beer, and in this way appear more active in her decision. Perhaps she is in a bar with men? If so, she displays qualities like those of Jane Avril and is a new woman indeed. While Japanese women in late Meiji graphic arts are not displayed in exactly the same ways as the French *Femme Nouvelle*, it is still pertinent to see that not only were goods traded between the two

countries, but artistic practice and social customs that allowed for Japanese women to be shown in ways aligning with new womanhood.

Conclusion

Though isolated for nearly 250 years before, during the Meiji period Japan emerged as a world power, engaging in modern and Western economic, artistic, and social practices. In these years of such radical change, no group was more effected than women. In comparing the representations of women in the graphic arts in France and Japan, much is to be gleaned about the circular relationship each county had on the other. For instance, without the opening of Japan in 1854, the Art Nouveau graphic style would not be present in the department store *bejin-ga* as a sign of modernity. While it is clear that the Art Nouveau style is not present in all depictions of the *Atarashi Onna*, just as it is not present in all depictions of the *Femme Nouvelle*, it still plays a vital role in perpetuating Western modernity in Japan. Thus, while the Japanese women in the posters I have analyzed may at first appear conservative in terms of the *Femme Nouvelle*, they are all displaying active aspects of modernization as new women through autonomous acts.

CHAPTER 5 FINAL REMARKS

In this conclusion, I will address the three main questions I posed at the beginning of this thesis. To begin, I will address the question: To what extent were the graphic Art Nouveau style and aspects of New Womanhood exchanged between France and Japan in the later part of the 19th and the early 20th centuries? Discussed in Chapter one, French artists' adaptation of Japanese art referred to as *japonisme* is a prime example of how Europe adopted Japanese style in an attempt to create a new type of art. While *japonisme* is largely associated with painting, I worked to establish its influence on French posters through comparing one of Mucha's advertisements for JOB cigarettes and an Edo print by Rigyoku. This is largely seen through similarities of unmodulated color, flatness, and heavy contours. In terms of Japan, the Art Nouveau style is obvious in the Miyoyo Magazine cover, which take directly from Mucha's style, along with Kitano print, as well. This Japanese Art Nouveau style is even seen in both of the department store *bijin-ga* that I look at in my fourth chapter. Additionally, the social exchange of New Womanhood in Japan is also telling of France and Japan's relationship. While the images of new women are not the necessarily the same in Japan as they are in France, aspects of modern artistic style, in the case of Japan, is used to perpetuate the West as its prime example of the modern. In Japan, department store advertisements display new womanhood as fashionable, while Japanese beer advertisements at the beginning of Taisho period show even more confidently new women participating in travel as well as in the act of alcohol consumption—both aspects that were not typically associated with women.

Secondly, I asked: Were these artistic and social changes one for one, or did each country incorporate them in different ways? As I have established, in an artistic sense, France and Japan pulled from each other's artistic styles to form a circular and somewhat mutual exchange—

France incorporated aspects of Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints into their posters, as can be seen in the works of artists like Toulouse-Lautrec's influence on Art Nouveau and Japanese graphic artists like Hisui Sugiura who then incorporated Western Art Nouveau style into their work. Japanese artists were pulling from their own natural artistic styles which were incorporated into the graphic Art Nouveau. In terms of New Womanhood, the exchange between France and Japan was much more one-sided. Where Japanese women were being introduced to ideas of the European enlightenment and by extension new ideas about women's roles, French women were arriving to New Womanhood through their access to education and a questioning of patriarchal roles.

Addressing my last question, How did these exchanges contribute to the modernization of both France and Japan?, I root the answer in the theme of change that runs through my thesis. Modernization, through artistic style, in both countries can be seen through a merging of both old and new aspects of art. While some proponents of the Art Nouveau movement sought to completely reinvent art, others sought to pull from traditional techniques in order to form a new type of traditional art. Similarly, during the Meiji period, Japan both accepted and rejected Western styles of art. This progression can be seen especially in the history of Japan's art schools. For the sake of this thesis, I chose to focus on *japonisme* as a way Art Nouveau graphic artists incorporated Japanese aesthetics to form their own unique style, and also chose to focus on those Japanese graphic artists who drew direct influence from Art Nouveau artists like Mucha for their work. Additionally, New Women provided subjects for graphic artists in both countries, enabling images of modern women to emerge. Thus, through incorporating both new artistic styles taken from each other as well as social thought, both France and Japan modernized together but to different extents.

APPENDIX
ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure A-1. John Moran Auctioneers, Favrite glass specimens, [n.d.], Louis Comfort Tiffany, <https://www.johnmoran.com/auction-archive/2010/20100316/32827-lot-1133-a-group-of-seven-louis-comfort-tiffany-iridescent-favrite-art-glass-objects>.



Figure A-2. Pablo Pater, Cast-iron balcony, 1175 Ríobamba Street, Buenos Aires, 1909, cast-iron, in *Art Nouveau*, by Stephen Escritt (London: Phaidon, 2000,) 239.

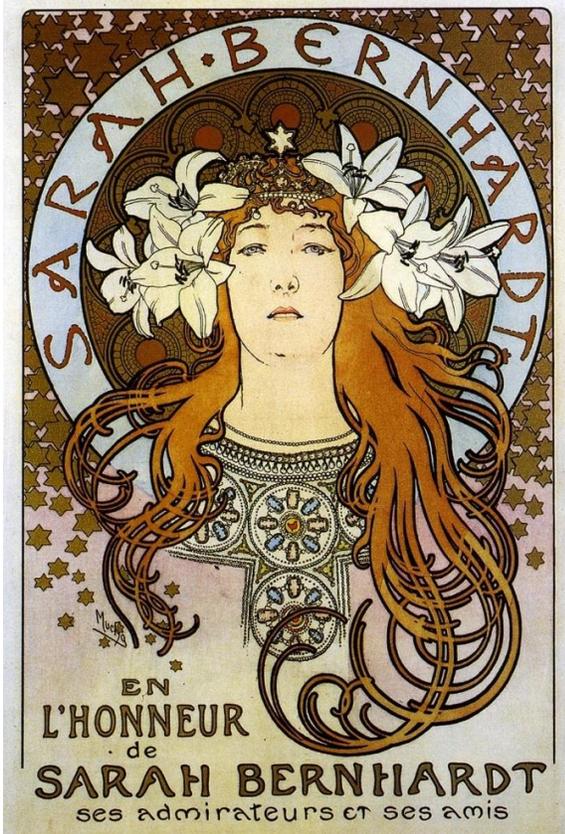


Figure A-3. Alphonse Mucha, *Sarah Bernhardt/La Plume*, 1897, lithograph, in *Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Posters and Panels*, by Jack Rennert and Alain Weill (Boston: A Hjert & Hjert Books, 1984), 111.



Figure A-4. *The Japan Times*. 'Lilies' diadem for 'La Princesse Lointaine,' 1895, Alphonse Mucha, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/culture/2015/08/04/arts/art-nouveaus-jewels-crown/#.Wqq38WbMzOQ>.



Figure A-5. Pintrest. Sarah Bernhardt, 1900, Reutlinger 1900s Postcard, <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/227431849910294192/>.

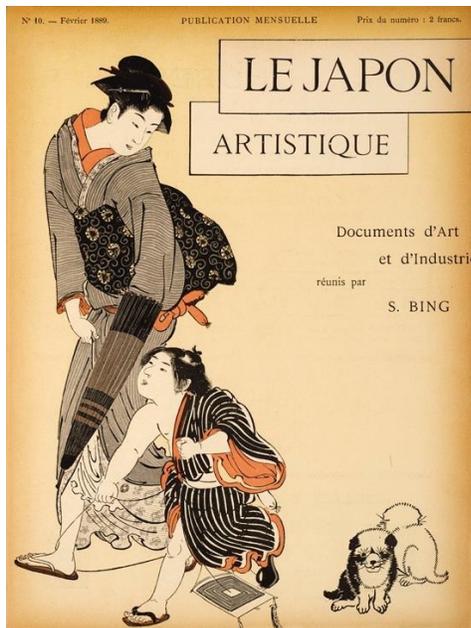


Figure A-6. Digital Library for the Decorative Arts and Material Culture. *Le Japon artistique; documents d'art et d'insustrie v. 2*, 1889, Kiyonaga, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/DLDecArts/DLDecArts-idx?type=article&did=DLDecArts.JaponArtistiqueII.i0075&id=DLDecArts.JaponArtistiqueII&isize=M>.



Figure A-7. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *La Goulue au Moulin Rouge*, 1891, color lithograph in *Japonisme: Japanese Influence on French Art 1854-1910*, by Gabriel P. Weisberg, Phillip Dennis Cate, Gerald Needham, Martin Eidelberg, and William R. Johnston (London: Sawers Publications, 1976), 108.



Figure A-8. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Le Divan Japonais*, 1892, color lithograph in *Japonisme: Japanese Influence on French Art 1854-1910*, by Gabriel P. Weisberg, Phillip Dennis Cate, Gerald Needham, Martin Eidelberg, and William R. Johnston (London: Sawers Publications, 1976), 108.

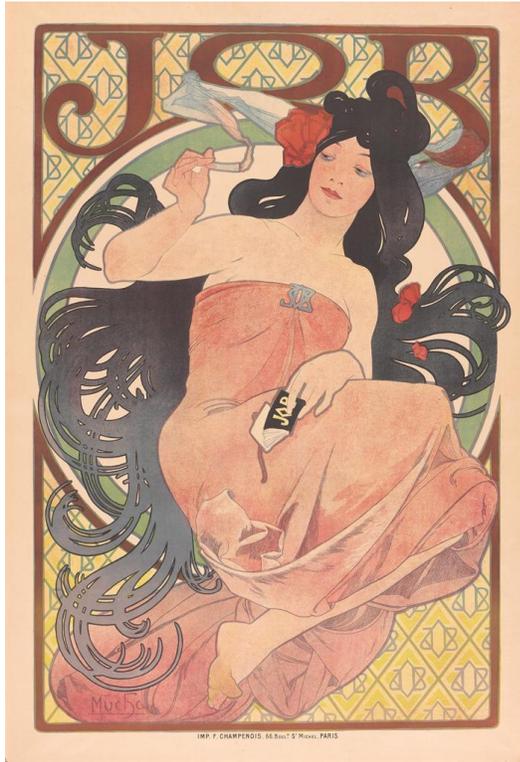


Figure A-9. Alphonse Mucha, *Job*, 1898, lithograph, in *Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Posters and Panels*, by Jack Rennert and Alain Weill (Boston: A Hjert & Hjert Books, 1984), 205.



Figure A-10. Unsigned, Couple escaping through hole in the wall, 1765, woodblock print, in *Japanese Woodblock Prints: A Catalogue of the Mary A. Ainsworth Collection*, by Roger S. Keyes (Oberlin, Ohio: Oberlin College, 1984) 31.



Figure A-11. Unknown artist, Cover of *Miyojo Magazine*, 1901, lithograph, in *Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Posters and Panels*, by Jack Rennert and Alain Weill (Boston: A Hjert & Hjert Books, 1984), 112.



Figure A-12. Tsunetomi Kitono, poster promoting an export trade fair at Kobe, 1911, lithograph, in *Japanese Graphic Design*, by Richard S. Thornton (London: Laurence King Ltd., 1991), 42.



Figure A-13. 'To the Feminist Congress!', *Le Grelot*, 1896, lithograph, in *'A Belle Epoque'? Women in French Society and Culture 1890-1914*, by Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarr. (New York, Berghahn Books, 2007), 86.

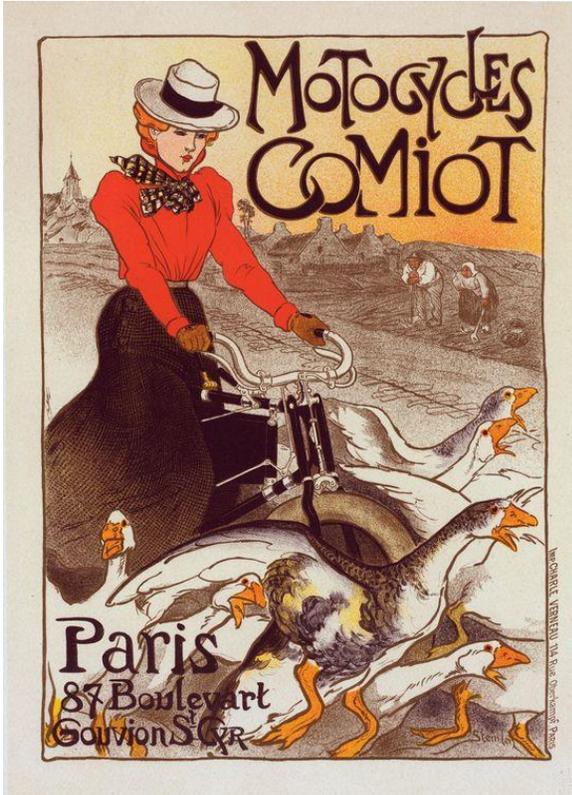


Figure A-14. Theophile-Alexandre Steinlen, *Motocycles Comiot*, 1899, lithograph, in *Toulouse-Lautrec and His Contemporaries: Posters of the Bell Epoque from the Wagner Collection*, by Ebria Feinblatt and Bruce Davis (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1985), 65.



Figure A-15. Eugène Grasset, *Cycles & Automobiles*, Marque Georges Richard/Cycles & Automobiles, 1899, color lithograph, in *L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters*, by Jeannine Falino (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), 45.

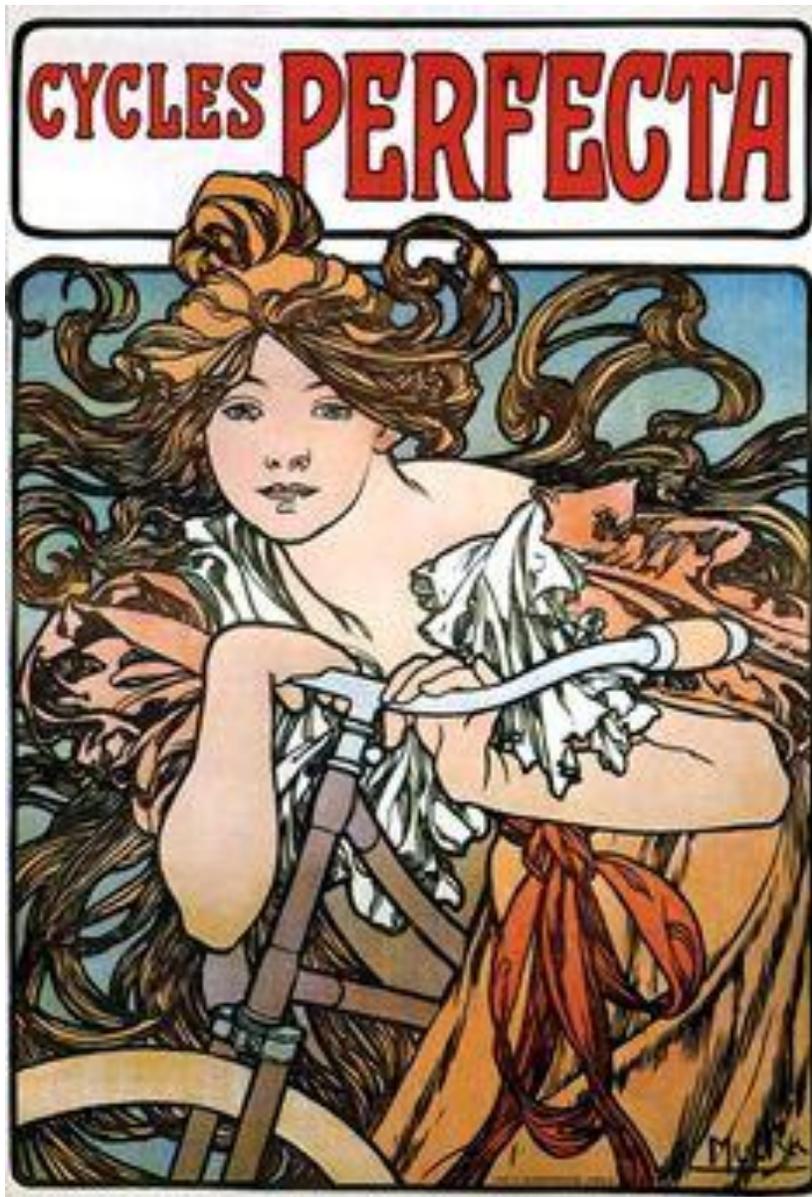


Figure A-16. Alphonse Mucha, *Cycles Perfecta*, 1902, lithograph, in *Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Posters and Panels*, by Jack Rennert and Alain Weill (Boston: A Hjert & Hjert Books, 1984), 295.



Figure A-17. Period Paper, John Griffiths Bicycle, 1898, Henri Thiriet, <https://www.periodpaper.com/collections/art-styles/products/1973-print-poster-ad-french-john-griffiths-bicycle-art-nouveau-henri-thiriet-013194-bike1-006> .



Figure A-18. Jules Chéret, *Théâtrophone*, 1890, lithograph, in *Toulouse-Lautrec and His Contemporaries: Posters of the Bell Epoque from the Wagner Collection*, by Ebria Feinblatt and Bruce Davis (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1985), 117.

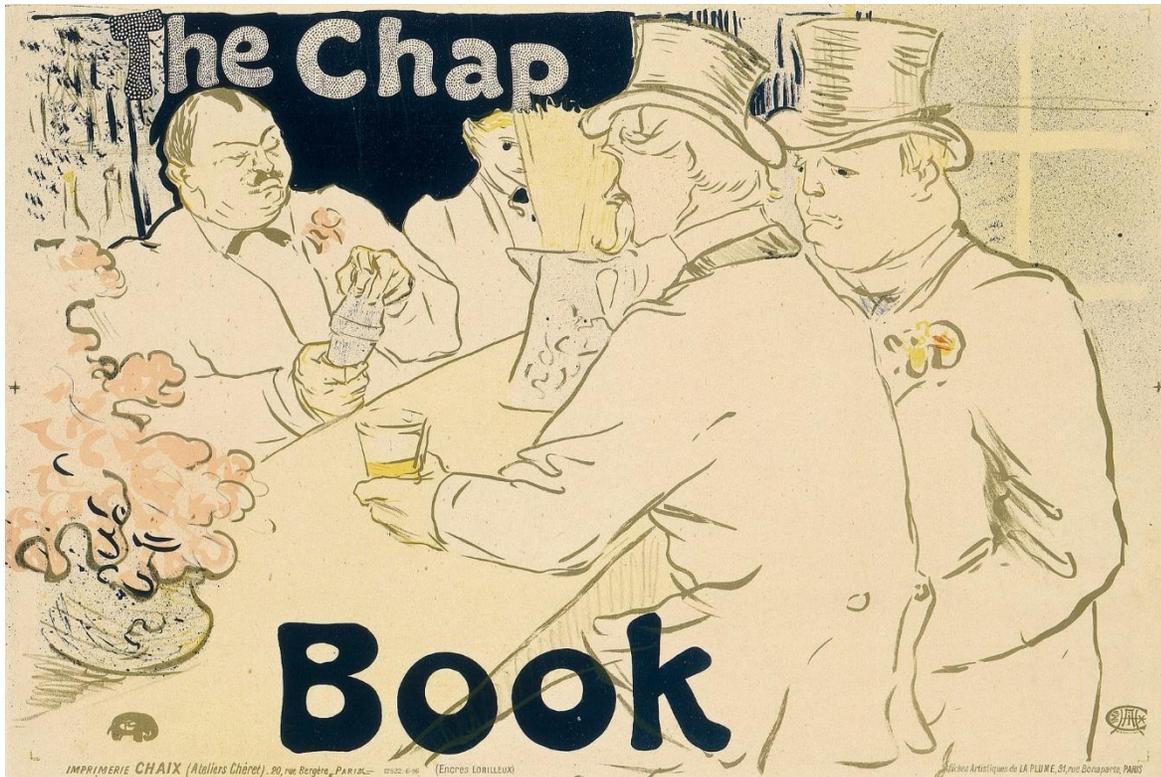


Figure A-19. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *The Chap Book—Irish and American Bar*, 1896, lithograph, in *Toulouse-Lautrec and His Contemporaries: Posters of the Bell Epoque from the Wagner Collection*, by Ebria Feinblatt and Bruce Davis (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1985), 98.

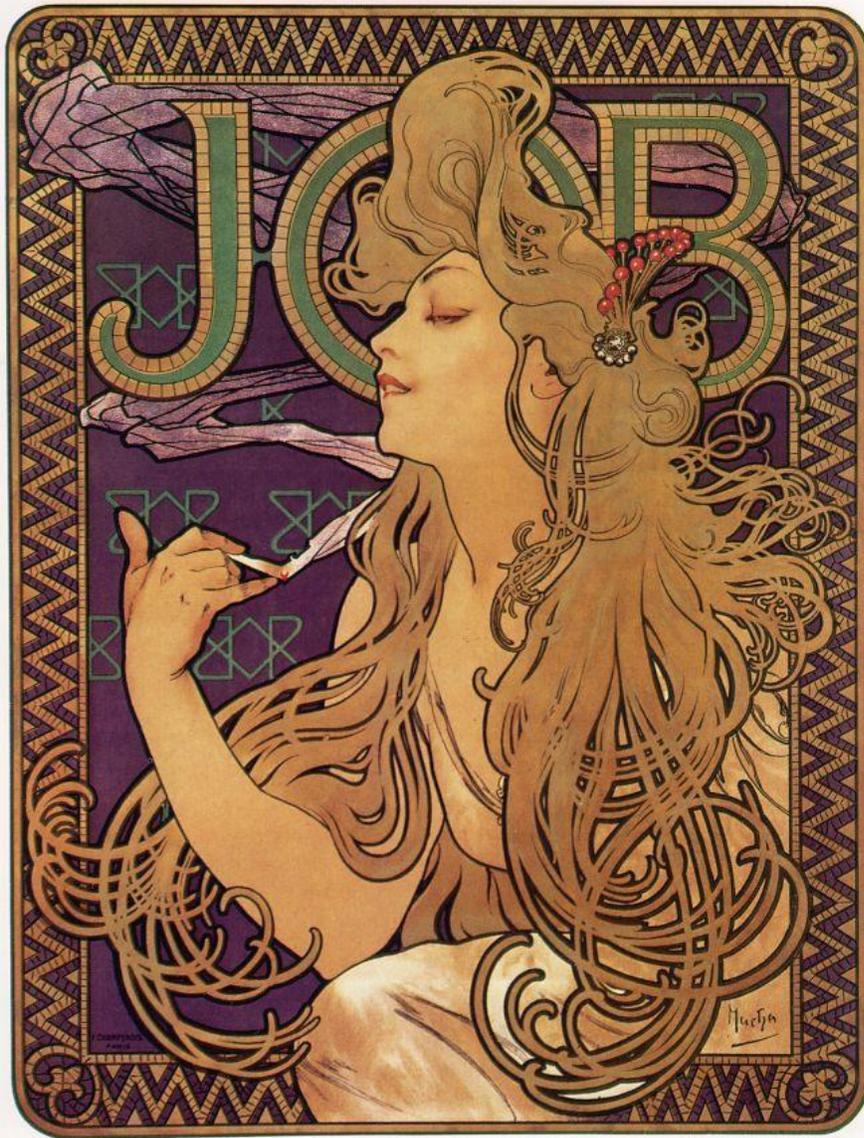


Figure A-20. Alphonse Mucha, *JOB*, c. 1896-97, color lithograph, in *Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Posters and Panels*, by Jack Rennert and Alain Weill (Boston: A Hjert & Hjert Books, 1984), 83.



Figure A-21. Georges Meunier, *Papier à Cigarettes Job*, 1894, lithograph, in *Toulouse-Lautrec and His Contemporaries: Posters of the Bell Epoque from the Wagner Collection*, by Ebria Feinblatt and Bruce Davis (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1985), 240.

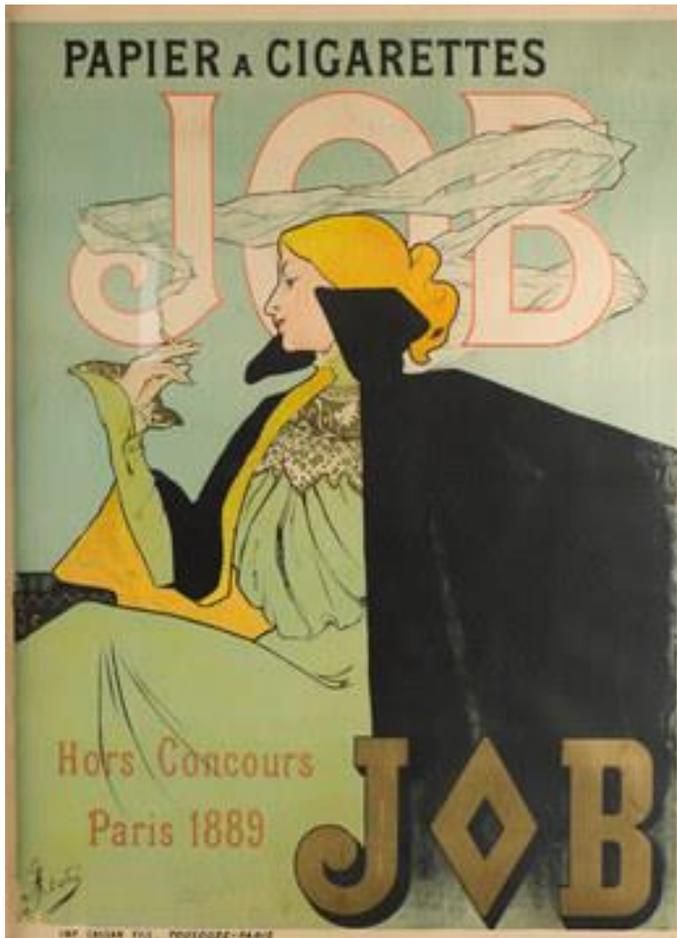


Figure A-22. Jane Atché, *Hors Concours (Job, Unrivaled)*, Paris, 1889, color lithograph, in *L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters*, by Jeannine Falino (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), 30.



Figure A-23. Kunisada, ekaban for perfume, about 1860, woodblock print, in *Japanese Graphic Design*, by Richard S. Thornton (London: Laurence King Ltd., 1991), 29.



Figure A-24. Goyo Hashiguchi, poster for Mitsukoshi Department Store, 1907, lithograph, in *Japanese Graphic Design*, by Richard S. Thornton (London: Laurence King Ltd., 1991), 36.



Figure A-25. Hisui Sugiura, poster for Mitsukoshi Department Store, 1914, lithograph, in *Japanese Graphic Design*, by Richard S. Thornton (London: Laurence King Ltd., 1991), 35.



Figure A-26. Hisui Sugiura, detail from poster for Mitsukoshi Department Store, 1914, lithograph, in *Japanese Graphic Design*, by Richard S. Thornton (London: Laurence King Ltd., 1991), 35.



Figure A-27. Pinterest. Dai Nippon Brewery Company, 1912, artist unknown, <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/337066353330580773/>.

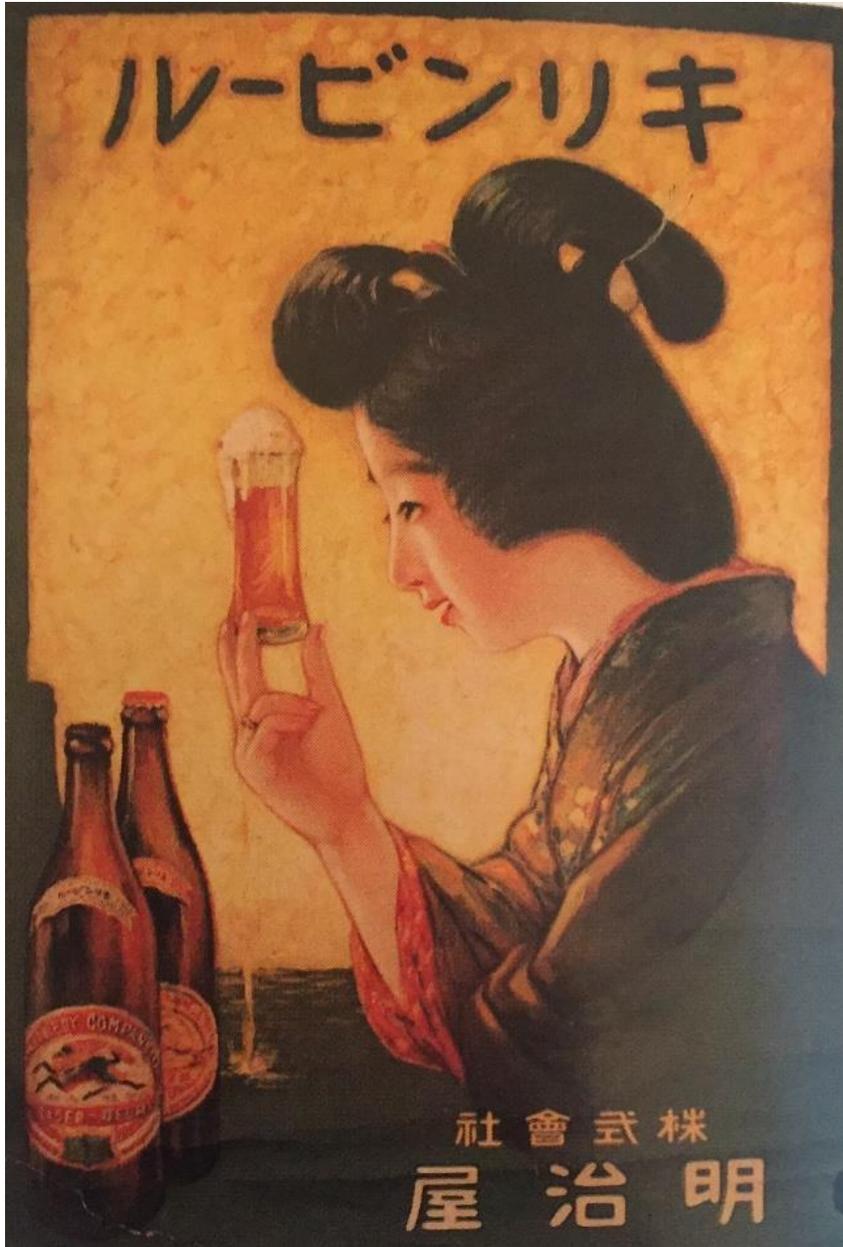


Figure A-28. Hokuu Tada, poster for Kirin beer, 1917, lithograph, in *Japanese Graphic Design*, by Richard S. Thornton (London: Laurence King Ltd., 1991), 46.

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