



PROJECT MUSE®

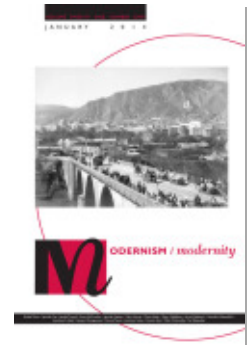
---

## Gas Mask Parade: Japan's Anxious Modernism

Gennifer Weisenfeld

Modernism/modernity, Volume 21, Number 1, January 2014, pp. 179-199  
(Article)

Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press  
DOI: [10.1353/mod.2014.0015](https://doi.org/10.1353/mod.2014.0015)



➔ For additional information about this article

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/mod/summary/v021/21.1.weisenfeld.html>



## Gas Mask Parade: Japan's Anxious Modernism

Gennifer Weisenfeld

An army of schoolgirls marching through Tokyo, their faces an anonymous sea of gas masks. Perhaps one of the most iconic images of the anxious modernism of 1930s Japan, *Gas Mask Parade, Tokyo* (*Gasu Masuku Kōshin, Tōkyō*) by photographer Horino Masao (1907–1998) (Figure 1), reveals the vivid yet prosaic inculcation of fear in Japanese daily life through the increasingly pervasive visual culture of civil defense.<sup>1</sup> Japan's invasion of Manchuria in late 1931—the beginning of its Fifteen Year War—marks the onset of a period of intense social mobilization and militarization on the home front as the warfront expanded on the continent and throughout the Pacific. Surveillance, secrecy, darkness, defensive barriers, physical security, and prophylaxis all became standard visual tropes of communal anxiety and national preparedness.

As a basic instrument of home front civil defense, the gas mask increasingly appeared in the public visual sphere, its use spreading from individuals to families, and even to animals such as dogs and horses.<sup>2</sup> And media historians and sociologists such as Iwamura Masashi and Tsuchida Hiroshige have explored the instrumentality and changing importance of gas masks in the context of air defense.<sup>3</sup> But the complicated and multilayered aesthetic resonance of gas mask imagery still remains uncharted territory.

Perhaps the aesthetics of the gas mask might seem like a contradiction in terms. Yet the visualization of gas masks throughout the 1930s and beyond clearly redefined the physical or “material” body, rendering the average citizen/imperial subject into an anonymous, seemingly inhuman monster of erotic curiosity.<sup>4</sup>

MODERNISM / *modernity*  
VOLUME TWENTY ONE,  
NUMBER ONE,  
PP 179–199. © 2014  
THE JOHNS HOPKINS  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

**Gennifer Weisenfeld** is Professor of Japanese Art History and Visual Studies at Duke University. She is the author of two monographs: *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905–1931* (University of California Press, 2002) and *Imagining Disaster: Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan's Great Earthquake of 1923* (University of California Press, 2012).





▲  
 Fig. 1. Horino Masao, *Gas Mask Parade, Tokyo* (*Gasu Masuku Kōshin, Tōkyō*), 1936. Image courtesy of the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography Collection.

Gas masks anonymized the civil population by obscuring individual physiognomies, and pointed to the posthuman condition of wartime, when people would be unable to survive the potentially toxic atmosphere of the metropolis. It was only the metropolitan centers that were actually threatened by poison gas bombs, but by 1930, nearly a quarter of the Japanese population lived in large cities, so the threat was immense.<sup>5</sup> This alienation of the modern subject from his/her environment on the militarized home front, which necessitated the application of commodity prostheses for survival, eerily paralleled the general processes of modernity that were gradually alienating the modern consumer-subject from the natural environment and replacing this relationship with commodity fetishes that similarly denaturalized the human body.

In exposing the body's vulnerability to the new technologies of war, the gas mask became a martial commodity par excellence, as seen in a 1938 advertisement for Fujikura Industrial Company gas masks in the national propaganda journal *Shashin Shūhō* (*Photographic Weekly Report*) (Figure 2), which pictures a well-dressed, male figure wearing a gas mask, his arm jauntily perched on his hip like a catalogue fashion model. Faintly visible below him is a scene of active civil defense showing a team of male first responders all wearing gas masks while shuttling away the injured on stretchers.<sup>6</sup>



▲  
Fig. 2. Advertisement, Fujikura Industrial Company gas masks, inside back cover, *Shashin Shūhō* 29, 31 August 1938.

Closer examination of the visual culture of the 1930s, however, reveals that the gas mask did much more than merely express or inculcate fear. It excited the imagination, particularly in the context of a widespread Japanese popular culture movement known as “*ero-guro-nansensu*” (or erotic-grotesque-nonsense, often shortened to *ero-guro*). For Japanese in the early Shōwa period (1926–89), from about 1926 through the 1930s, *ero-guro-nansensu* referred to a broad trend in literature and art that focused on dark and sexually charged subjects that tended toward criminality, horror, sadomasochism, necrophilia, the Occult, the bizarre, and other so-called “deviant” (*hentai*) topics.<sup>7</sup> Gas mask imagery was explicitly evoked within the *ero-guro* cultural context, connecting death and sensuality, the monstrous and the erotic. And images such as Horino’s parade of schoolgirls, which presented a dystopian futurescape of unified automatons—particularly female automatons—joined the panoply of ominous visualizations of women in *ero-guro* popular culture, such as women as criminals, machine-made replicants in precision chorus lines from musical revues or Hollywood films, and as conglomerations of dismembered body parts (particularly legs) often in modernist photomontages, that collectively tapped into a deep-seated locus of modern anxiety (and titillation), the rise and liberation of women.<sup>8</sup>

182 As Christine Marran has brought to light, one of the enduring genres of modern Japanese literature and a mainstay of *ero-guro* culture in the 1930s were the titillating tales about “poison or toxic women” (*dokufu* or *yūdokuna onna*) whose scandalous murders by poison (*dokusatsu*) and other violent means were widely recounted in the news and serialized in popular magazines. The trope of the poison woman made modernity’s toxicity palpable and pleasurable.<sup>9</sup>

By presenting a diverse range of media from modernist and documentary photographs, popular print culture, cartoons, and commercial design to government hortatory and propaganda publications and posters, I will explore the interocular construction of an anxious yet perversely pleasurable visual culture of Japanese civil defense. I will work dialogically between the vision expressed in prominent national propaganda journals such as *Shashin Shūhō* (*Photographic Weekly Report*) and the imaging in popular magazines such as *Hanzai Kagaku* (*Criminology*), one of the iconic *ero-guro* mass circulation journals of the period. Not surprisingly, contemporary critics dismissed the frivolity of *ero-guro* culture in general as sexually and morally deviant, hedonistic, narcissistic, and lacking in any redeeming cultural value. In recent years, however, two radically different scholarly interpretations of *ero-guro* have surfaced, one typified by Miriam Silverberg, who views the movement as liberatory, transgressive, and democratic, opening up new forms of culture to a larger public sphere of personal expression; the other, however, compellingly represented by Mark Driscoll, extends contemporary critical readings but without their dismissive attitude, pointing to *ero-guro*’s more potent sinister side. In Driscoll’s dire assessment, the necropolitics of *ero-guro* are the not-so-hidden underside of Japan’s modernity and imperial expansion, which openly purveyed drugs (opium), pimping and prostitution, and a large-scale economy in human trafficking around the empire. Thus, the gas mask is not merely the transparent life-saving instrument that it might appear to be, but rather a multivalent symbol of national defense and eroticized monstrosity—a prophylaxis and a fetish.

### Civil Air Defense Policy

But let me step back a moment. It is essential to understand the evolution of the 1930s’ official culture of civil air defense or *bōkū* that contributed to the social context of this multivalent gas mask imagery. In the eyes of the Japanese government, two groups were involved in civil defense: first, the air force and army who were responsible for preventing attacks; and second, civilians, who were charged with ameliorating damage and tending to the injured. The latter is my focus here. Citywide air defense drills (*bōkū enshū*) began in Osaka as early as 1928, and were organized in full force in the imperial capital, Tokyo, from 1933. The devastating conflagrations following the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake that killed over 100,000 people and razed over 44% of the land area of the capital, put the entire nation on alert about the necessities of mobilized civil defense. Official campaigns for air defense explicitly drew on memories of this horrific national tragedy, linking it with prospective attacks from the sky. Visualizations of this campaign emphasized that the damage from incendiary bombs would be

exponentially greater than the earthquake conflagrations. Under the cautionary title, “Incendiary Bomb Threat” (*Shōidan no Kyōi*), one civil air defense poster from 1938 (Figure 3) warned, “The Great Kantō Earthquake, fire originated from a mere *one hundred places*, the imperial capital became a *burned wasteland*. With only one of the enemy’s planes, an incendiary bomb, *5000 places*.”<sup>10</sup> In the early 1930s, as David Earhart has noted, images of Japanese aerial bombardment of Chinese targets on the mainland during the Shanghai Incident of 1932 conveyed conflicting messages about Japan’s military might and its vulnerability, demonstrating that “Japan was master of the skies in Asia,” while showing the threat of devastation that these air raids posed for the homeland.<sup>11</sup>



▲  
Fig. 3. “Incendiary Bomb Threat” (*Shōidan no Kyōi*), civil air defense poster, 1938.

184 By April 1937, the Japanese government had promulgated a Civil Air Defense Law elucidating 22 points necessary for national preparation. These preparations began immediately for implementing a full-scale civil defense drill in the capital the following year. The plans were greatly accelerated after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July 1937 that incited the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese war.<sup>12</sup>

The preparations and drills were then implemented on October 1, 1937, and kicked off a major national civil air defense campaign as part of a larger social education/enlightenment (*keimō*) propaganda effort, which included an exhibition to inculcate “air defense thought” (*bōkū shisō*) among the public.<sup>13</sup> The Civil Air Defense Law required blackout control, disinfection, anti-gas attack measures, and evacuation and first aid strategies, as well as monitoring of communication and warnings needed for implementation of these measures. The Japanese Red Cross, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, and the Federation of Tokyo Metropolitan Civilian Defense Corps jointly produced a series of enlightenment posters, supported by the Home Ministry and the Ministry of the Army and Navy. The posters illustrated displays at the exhibition.<sup>14</sup>

One poster titled “Action Radius of Heavy Bombers” showed the target range of aerial bombers originating from foreign territories such as Alaska or Manila, capital of the American Pacific colony in the Philippines, as well as British-held Hong Kong, and the Bonin Islands in the South Pacific (which included Iwojima, an eventual site of American invasion). The two major cities of Tokyo and Osaka are explicitly labeled on the map of the Japanese archipelago, which sits right in the center of overlapping target ranges from numerous destinations. Japan was now within the sights of Allied bombers, no longer at a safe distance from the conflict.

In the poster “Attitude for Civilian Air Raid Defense,” people are reminded not to scream or panic. A woman, dressed in wartime civil defense gear, including the simplified work clothes known as *monpe*, a kit bag, and her requisite woman’s patriotic group identity sash, calmly looks up at the sky and presumably knows to go to her proper defense station. The policeman in the center directs her and others to their posts. A businessman below prepares to don his gas mask. The possible scenario of injuries and damage on the ground was then vividly depicted at well-known urban locales such as Tokyo station. In these images, civilians are shown responsibly engaged in critical defense activities.

Poison gas (*dokugasu*) of various sorts was terrifyingly pictured infiltrating the human body, penetrating deeply into the lungs. These insidious weapons target the mother, father, and innocent children, causing an array of hideous afflictions. These afflictions were gruesomely illustrated in civil air defense handbooks to further instill fear.

Among other things, preparedness against such attacks required darkness. Invisibility from the air could provide protection. Even a casually lit cigarette at an inopportune time could bring down the wrath of the skies on the nation as seen in the poster “A Glimmering Light Invites Air-Strike” (Figure 4). No action was too small to be inconsequential. The civic and physical body needed to be disciplined to protect the nation.

Gas masks were a principal prophylactic for protection against poison gas bombs (*gasudan ni taisuru bōdoku*), a major civil defense threat along with incendiary bombs



▲  
Fig. 4. "A Glimmering Light Invites Air-Strike" (*Moreta Ittō Tekki o Maneku*), civil air defense poster, 1938.

(*shōidan*). The Home Ministry's Cabinet Information Bureau publication, *Shashin Shūhō* (*Photographic Weekly Report*), was a central media apparatus for communicating the civil defense education/enlightenment campaign to the general public and was the single most influential and authoritative of Japan's wartime news journals. Circulated through neighborhood associations (*tonarigumi*), *Shashin Shūhō* can be said to have reached every Japanese citizen.<sup>15</sup>

*Shashin Shūhō* published a civil air defense special issue on August 31, 1938, a month before another set of national defense drills were to be held to raise public awareness. The special issue was titled *Bōkū Oboechō* (*Air Defense Reminder Notebook*) and the cover featured Tōhō Theater actress Tachibana Mieko set against a bright fuschia background, which lent an unusual whiff of stardom to this basic civilian defense activity (Figure 5). The oblique association between gas masks and the glamorous world of

186 entertainment, and by extension *ero-guro*, mitigated the overarching solemnity of the journal's defense mission. In addition, the back cover of the issue presented a spectral, highly abstracted gas mask figure to advertise the government's National Air Defense Exhibition that invoked a futuristic, posthuman monstrosity lurking in a shadowy, alienated world of fire and darkness (Figure 6). As an invitation to the exhibition displaying the government's so-called "enlightenment" posters and its systematic civil defense plan, it seems to offer a gateway to the grotesque rather than a roadmap to the rational.



▲  
Fig. 5. Air Defense Reminder Notebook (*Bōkū Oboechō*), cover, *Shashin Shūhō*, August 31, 1938.



▲ Fig. 6. National Air Defense Exhibition (*Kokumin Bōkū Tenrankai*), back cover, *Shashin Shūhō*, August 31, 1938.

Iwamura has argued that until July and August of 1939, the official information about aerial defense was in fact very vague, which he sees as indicative of a pervasive sense of denial that aerial attack would actually occur on the Japanese mainland. This changed when extensive reports and photographs of the air strikes on English and German cities reached Japan and the casualty reports started to flow in in September 1940. Japanese attitudes then changed significantly after the American Doolittle raids on April 18, 1942, the first aerial bombings to hit the Japanese mainland, which incited

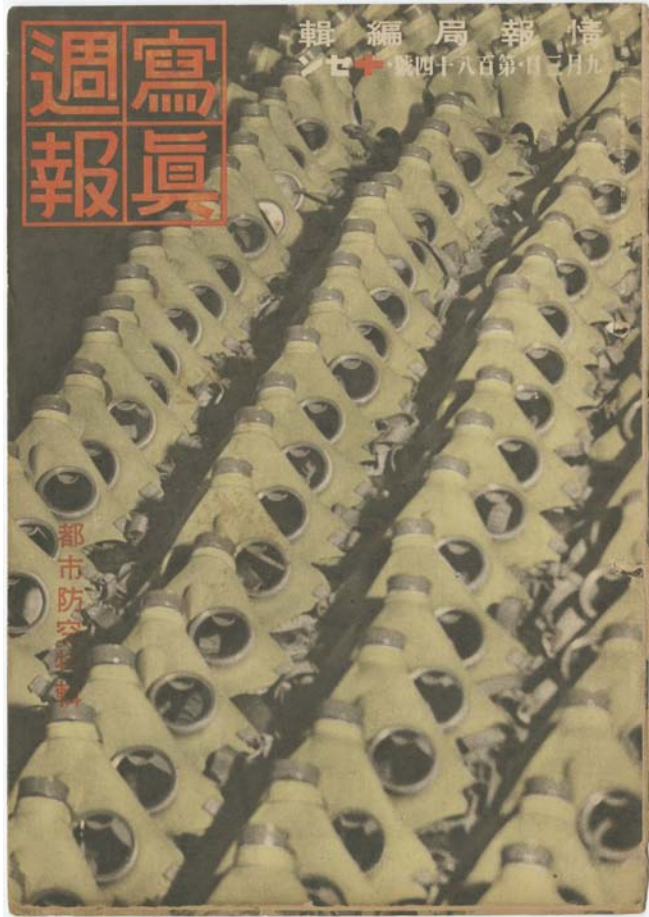
188 widespread fear and anxiety among the general populace, profoundly shaking national morale, despite intense government propaganda that downplayed the damage.<sup>16</sup> The amplified urgency during this time period is evident in *Shashin Shūhō*'s repeated visualization of air defense drills.<sup>17</sup> These drills involved doing actual simulations of burning buildings and ladder relays to determine how long it would take to extinguish wooden structures on fire. The emphasis also shifted to incendiary bombs and fire prevention, downplaying the likelihood of poison gas bombs.

Iwamura has identified a major attitudinal shift around 1940 when the specter of actual fire bombings became real. And with this, the emphasis of government messages about air defense shifted from how to protect your body from danger to how not to be afraid and bravely fight the onslaught without regard for one's own safety. Air raid shelters (*bōkūgō*) were no longer for refuge, but places from which to fight fire and bombing damage. Each civilian was deputized as a soldier for the homeland. They were told not to think of their individual bodies or property, but to concentrate on the objective of minimizing total collective damage. Bodily control was of utmost importance, as people were warned not to panic or scream, but to work in complete silence. The new slogan was "*shishu*," or defend to the death.

The new possibilities of total apocalyptic fire bombing were shown in numerous simulated air raid scenarios, such as a frightening double-page spread from the *Shashin Shūhō* September 1941 special issue on aerial defense.<sup>18</sup> Here, the compelling text superimposed on the vivid imagery of an infernal cityscape demanded self sacrifice, challenging home front defenders to work with the same courage as war martyrs, now ensconced in the sacred pantheon of heroic spirits (*eirei*), which included the celebrated "three valorous human bullets" (*nikudan sanyūshi*, also known as the "three valorous human bombs," *bakudan sanyūshi*) who had supposedly detonated themselves to assist their squadron in the Shanghai Incident of 1932, a mentality that would later produce the well-known kamikaze suicide squads and the popular glorification of mass suicide (euphemistically known as *gyokusai*, or "dying gallantly like a shattered jewel") that obligated imperial subjects and soldiers to die for Japan's sacred war.<sup>19</sup> In effect, citizens were now no longer allowed to run away from aerial bombing. They were required to be martyrs.

Although a sea of gas masks rolling off the assembly line graced the cover of this 1941 aerial defense special issue (Figure 7), it is clear from the interior articles that the new ideological stress on "*shishu*," or defense to the death, reduced their importance to just one of many firefighting implements. Paradoxically, it was right at the moment that the prospect of air raid attacks became most real that gas masks became less important, although no less symbolic. This was undoubtedly related to the clear shift in concern from poison gas bombs to incendiary bombs.<sup>20</sup>

The height of the dissemination of gas mask imagery through the 1930s was a period when belief that there would actually be an aerial bombing on the mainland was relatively low and the articulation of air defense was still comparatively vague and undeveloped. Gas masks were highlighted as a means of bodily protection and self-preservation in a toxic situation that was indefinite and seemed improbable. As



▲  
Fig. 7. Cover, *Shashin Shūhō* 184, September 3, 1941.

the specter of aerial bombing got closer and more likely around 1940, the policy of self-preservation changed radically to self-sacrifice and defending the homeland to the death, which reduced the value of gas masks as defensive instruments. If used at all, gas masks were offensive weapons that would assist in the individual's complete self-absorption and obliteration in the collective fight.

### Monstrous Transformation and the Posthuman

Keeping this evolving context in mind, then, I would like to turn back to the early 1930s, when gas mask imagery prominently emerged in Japan and became commingled with *eru-guro* and consumer culture. This was a period when “air-defense novels” became a popular genre of military fiction, and, as Cary Karacas has importantly illuminated, well-known authors such as Unno Jūza, became wildly successful with publications like *Kūshū Sōsō Kyoku* (*Air Raid Requiem*), which was serialized in *Asahi* magazine in 1932. The image of the gas mask, an initially perplexing birthday

190 gift from a worried son to his father, launches this gripping and gruesome story of a devastating U.S. aerial attack on Tokyo that includes poison gas. It is an epic saga that mixes science fiction, fantasy, and horror, and only a secret weapon developed by a brilliant scientist narrowly saves the unprepared city at the end.<sup>21</sup>

Earlier the same year in March, the cover design by Imamura Torashi (1902–1975) for the special issue of *Hanzai Kagaku* (*Criminology*) titled “If We Fight” (*Moshi Tatakawaba*) similarly featured the gas mask, in this case, covering the face of a ferocious male soldier lunging forward with a bayonet (Figure 8).<sup>22</sup> Set within an abstractly rendered, decontextualized background, where only the rising sun of the Japanese national flag to the right is legible, the image presents an alternative vision of the hypermasculinity evoked during wartime. The figure represents a kind of savagery that is frightening yet enticing. Except for the abstracted symbol of the flag, the national, racial, and ethnic characteristics of this savage warrior are not distinguishable.<sup>23</sup> Gender distinctions, however, are clearly maintained through sartorial differentiation. The careful maintenance of gender distinctions in the dehumanized physique of the gas mask figure is consistent and significant; in effect defending a threatened tradition through hypermodern accouterments. While the masculinized military fought on the battle lines, the home front was predominantly women and children (or elderly and presumably infirm men). Moreover, the militarization of women on the home front increasingly suppressed gender distinctions and mobilized women into physical service in civil defense. War sublimated the sexual liberation of Japanese modernity into martial labor. For women, this was particularly visible in the widespread shift in the late 1930s to *monpe* (a wartime informal women’s uniform of practical clothing and protective air defense hoods that desexualized and rusticated the body, as this garb was associated with lower-class rural farm labor), effectively masculinizing women and re-gendering their labor. This ambiguation of gender ran contrary to social norms and sexual hierarchies, but was deemed necessary in extreme wartime circumstances—it is also evident in the sartorial developments in wartime Western nations and new gender categories such as Rosie the Riveter. As anthropologist Jennifer Robertson has noted, during this time period, “the markers distinguishing male from female, masculine from feminine, were losing their polarity.”<sup>24</sup>

The gas mask figure speaks to collective unease over the physical transformation of bodies in wartime, in effect creating modern monstrosities. This is tellingly addressed in the interior pages of this special issue of *Hanzai Kagaku* that question the nature of humanity and interpersonal intimacy in this age of monstrosity. The header on a double-page photographic spread (Figure 9) reads, “War completely turns the world of humanity upside down” (*senso wa ningen no yo o hikkurikaesu*), trailed by the inventory of human emotions: “Romantic love, motherly love, the heavenly world of children.” On one page, three young, well-dressed Western women stand arm-in-arm wearing disfiguring gas masks, the caption reads, “Tactics spread poison gas all around; beautiful young women wear gas masks.” (*senjutsu wa dokugasu o makichirasu; utsukushii kanojotachi wa masuku o toru*). Below sits a photograph of a Western couple dressed in elegant evening wear facing each other about to kiss. Underneath, the caption reads, “In the midst of poison gas you can’t kiss, but...” (*dokugasu no naka de kisu wa dekinai kedo*).



Fig. 8. Imamura Torashi (design), Cover, *Hanzai Kagaku*, “If We Fight” (Moshi Tatakawaba), special issue, March 1932.



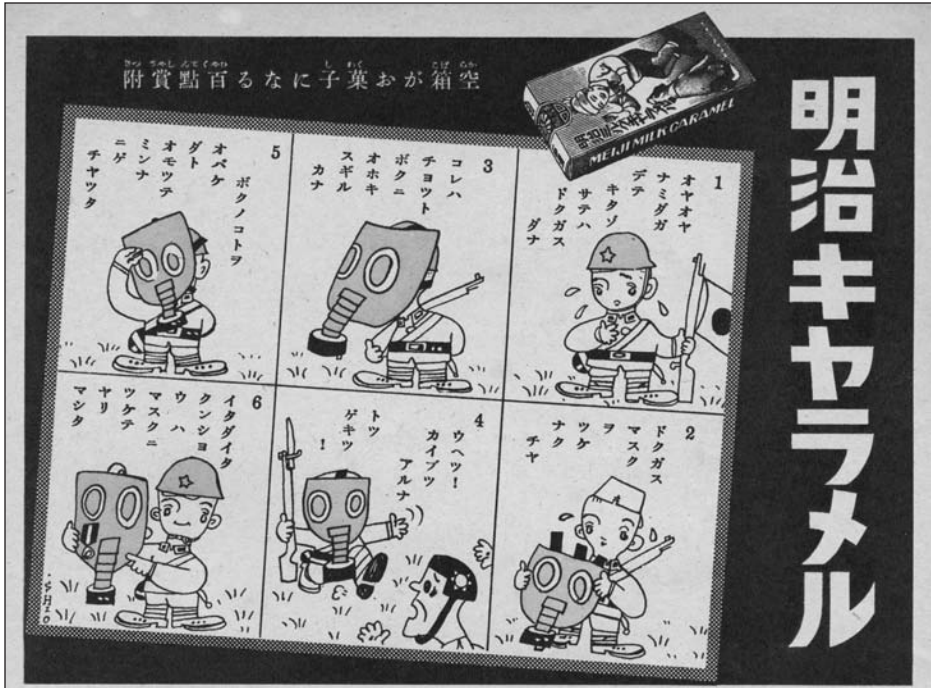
Fig. 9. “War completely turns the world of humanity upside down” (*senso wa ningen no yo o hikkuri-kaesu*), *Hanzai Kagaku*, special issue, March 1932, 184-85.

192 In the context of Japanese visual culture of the 1920s and 30s, the kiss, particularly as public spectacle in Hollywood films, was always associated with the realm of *ero*. As Silverberg notes, the *ero* special issue of *Eiga no Tomo (Film Friend)* magazine in June 1931 recounted in a dedicated section titled “Kiss notes,” an *ero*-encyclopedia of modern sexualized gestures from foreign films.<sup>25</sup> And according to censorship practices recorded by the Home Ministry, kissing fell under the category of lewdness (*inyō*) and obscenity (*hiwai*).<sup>26</sup> Thus, here the gas mask becomes a kind of fetish in the modern *ero-guro* arena of deviant sexuality necessitated by the perversions of war.

Reading from right to left, the final set of photos in *Hanzai Kagaku* superimposes a photograph of a Western woman in a gas mask swaddling her infant, also in a mask, over an early seventeenth-century Baroque painting of the Madonna and Child by Spanish painter Bartolomé Esteban Murillo. The caption reads sardonically, “Does war change Murillo’s famous painting?” (*tataikai wa Muriro no meiga o kakukaeru daro?*). While the gas mask emerges as a wartime fetish of erotic curiosity, it inhibits true sexual or human intimacy. It also foretells a breakdown in all truly human functions: love, reproduction, and motherhood (the latter two being critical values inculcated in Japanese female national subjects in the ideology of “good wife, wise mother” or *ryōsai kenbo*).

In a similarly jocular manner, the monstrous transformation enacted by the donning of the gas mask is humorously taken up in a Meiji caramels advertisement (Figure 10) that ran in *Shashin Shūhō* in 1938, thus demonstrating the commingling of the somber sphere of propaganda with the parodic humor of *ero-guro-nansensu*. Eyes tearing from poison gas during military maneuvers on the Asian continent, a Japanese soldier in the Meiji advertisement puts on a gas mask. He then encounters the enemy, a Chinese republican soldier, who shrieks with fear “A monster!” and runs away. Scratching his head, the Japanese soldier muses, “Everyone thought I was a spook and ran away!” In the final scene, the soldier pins the medal he has received for defeating the enemy on the front of the gas mask that won the fight for him. Irreverently commenting on Japan’s military prowess, the cartoon is casually transgressive, while still reinforcing the ethnic bigotry of the Japanese colonial mentality.<sup>27</sup>

While the Tokyo aerial defense parades by the Members of the Association of Imperial Army Dogs with gas masks on June 27–28, 1936, introduced the intimidating, animalistic quality of the battlefield to the home front, the humor of dogs in gas masks was still not lost on the public, as evident in a children’s cartoon page, which shows just such a comical image by the “Woof Woof Cartoon Association.”<sup>28</sup> Gas masks were actually a regular feature in children’s print culture, widely appearing in everything from the popular cartoon about a beloved hound *cum* soldier called *Norakuro (Stray Black)* published in *Shōnen Kurabu (Boys’ Club)* magazine to detailed instructions on how to make model gas masks in *Shōnen Kagaku (Boys’ Science)*.<sup>29</sup> Gas mask imagery strategically linked the inculcation of civic preparedness among Japan’s youth with humor and consumer entertainment, a convergence vividly exemplified by the Morinaga Confectionery Company’s advertising campaign tie-ups with local authorities and schools launched in cities on the southern island of Kyushu in 1936 and 1937.<sup>30</sup> Morinaga, a popular manufacturer of chocolate and milk caramels with a burgeoning



▲  
Fig. 10. Advertisement, Meiji Caramels, inside back cover, *Shashin Shūhō* 36, October 19, 1938.

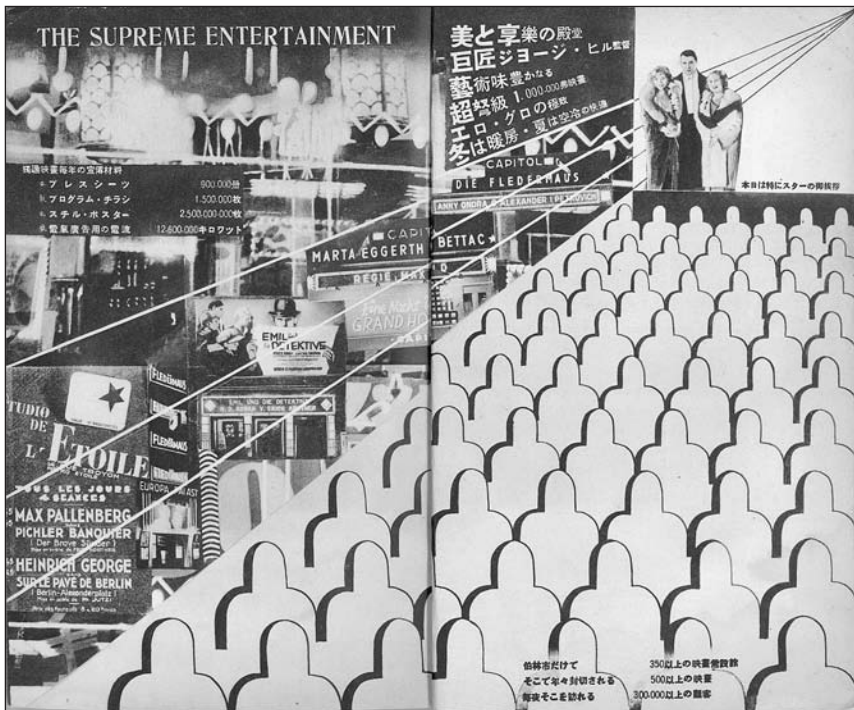
network of chain stores (the Morinaga Beltline) around the nation and the Japanese empire, sponsored a series of advertising events billed as “air defense sales” that offered a free model gas mask as a gift with any 10-sen purchase. Exclaiming “Air raid! Water! Gas Mask! Switch!” event publicity used the official government slogan for air defense to promote the enticing rows of model masks interspersed with Morinaga caramel boxes.<sup>31</sup> Salesgirls, store employees, and mannequins cheerily accented the display by also donning the masks. Lauded by newspapers as the “backbone of the national polity” (*kokka no chūken*), the company then helped organize air defense drills and parades of adults and children, including schoolgirls in uniform, wearing the model gas masks, seamlessly blending the anxious communal inculcation of civic preparedness for potentially deadly air raids with the pleasurable consumption of candy.<sup>32</sup>

I would like to conclude by returning to Horino Masao’s haunting *Gas Mask Parade, Tokyo*, which presumably captures the June 27, 1936 Tokyo civil air defense drill parade of schoolgirls in the Ginza area of Tokyo.<sup>33</sup> Juxtaposed with other documentary images of the same event, Horino’s modernist credentials and the aesthetic anxiety they induce are readily apparent; his sharp perspective, distorted proportions, and dramatic cropping all contribute to the image’s ominous quality and *ero-guro* connotations.<sup>34</sup> A regular contributor to *Hanzai Kagaku* (*Criminology*), Horino published numerous photographs in the stunning array of photomontages featured in the opening pages of the magazine in the early 1930s.<sup>35</sup> Horino’s collaborative photomontages in *Hanzai Kagaku*, regardless of the designer with whom he worked, reveal a pictorial metanarrative

194 relating modernity, capitalism, mass culture, urban slums, marginality, and ultimately militarization. His collaborative montage with Takeda Rintarō titled *Spreading Tokyo (Part I)* (*Manen suru Tōkyō, Sono Ichi*) (Figure 11) in the September 1932 issue, for example, presents the marginal spaces lurking in the shadows of the imperial capital.<sup>36</sup> While on the surface, such documentary images form a biting social critique with captions such as “Injustice” (*Fusei*), within the space of *Hanzai Kagaku* (a journal titled, after all, *Criminology*), they also titillate prurient interest in the marginal “Others” in these shadowy places—the criminal sorts who cavort in these marginal, seedy, slum-like spaces.<sup>37</sup> As David Ambaras’s work on the prewar Japanese imagination of urban slums vividly reveals, “the city was a showcase not of progress but of insecurity and inexpressible horror.” And as he goes on to discuss, “reports of cases of infant deaths [in the slums by individuals of dubious character] can be placed within a broader governmental project to elucidate dark spaces and transgressive figures and subject them to disciplinary surveillance or pedagogic protection.” The recounting of these stories treated the Japanese reading public to a kind of “pleasurable pain” through vicarious experiences of prohibited desires or fantasies.<sup>38</sup> Horino’s April 1932 collaboration with one of the leading figures in Japanese modern theater, Senda Koreya, *Fade In/Fade Out* (Figure 12), is a montage meditation on “The Supreme Entertainment” culture of Hollywood and the global film industry that was drawing in hundreds of thousands of spectators, rendered as an anonymous sea of filmgoers that uncannily prefigure the gas mask parade. Horino and Senda’s photomontage culminates in the genre of war movies, with the elusive gas mask figure portentously appearing in the middle of the composition (Figure 13), a repeated cipher of the commingled pleasure and anxiety that permeated public visual culture in 1930s Japan before air raids went from being a deathly specter to a deadly reality.<sup>39</sup>



▲ Fig. 11. Horino Masao (photograph), Takeda Rintarō (design), *Spreading Tokyo (Part I) (Manen suru Tōkyō, Sono Ichi)* *Hanzai Kagaku* 3, no. 9, September 1932.



▲ Fig. 12. Horino Masao (photograph), Senda Koreya (design), *Fade In/Fade Out (Fēdo In/Fēdo Auto)*, *Hanzai Kagaku* 3, no. 4, April 1932. Image courtesy of Toda Masako.



modernist theatre productions in Russia as far back as Kazimir Malevich's designs for *Victory Over the Sun* (1913). Gas mask figures appear prominently in Russian theater, such as Sergei Eisenstein's production of Sergei Tretiakov's agitprop drama *The Gas Masks* (1924), Aleksandr Rodchenko's designs for Vsevolod Meyerhold's 1929 staging of Vladimir Mayakovsky's *The Bedbug* (1929), and a slightly comical gas mask figure in the poster for the 1931 theatrical production *Declared Dead*, which was devoted to the theme of national defense. Gerard McBurney, "Declared Dead, But Only Provisionally: Shostakovich, Soviet Music-Hall and *Uslovno ubityi*," in Neil Edmunds, ed., *Soviet Music and Society under Lenin and Stalin* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 45, 64. Rodchenko's work was well known and highly influential in Japan, and of particular note is his chilling 1930 montage illustration for the magazine *Abroad* (n. 2) of a dystopian future cityscape titled *War of the Future*, which shows two menacing gas mask figures standing in the billowing smoke of a modern metropolis under siege by weaponized zeppelins. See Magdalena Dabrowski, Leah Dickerman, and Peter Galassi, eds., *Aleksandr Rodchenko* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1998), 274–75, 325.

5. Miriam Rom Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 277, n. 9.

6. Inside back cover, *Shashin Shūhō* 29, 31 August 1938.

7. Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*; Mark Driscoll, *Absolute Erotic, Absolute Grotesque: The Living, Dead, and Undead in Japan's Imperialism, 1895–1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

8. Barbara Hamill Sato, *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Miriam Silverberg, "The Modern Girl as Militant," in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600–1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

9. Christine Marran, *Poison Woman: Figuring Female Transgression in Modern Japanese Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

10. National Archives of Japan, poster collection, *Fire Bombing Prevention*. (Accessed 28 May 2010).

11. Earhart, 114. The Shanghai Incident (also known as the Shanghai War of 1932, or in Japan as the First Shanghai Incident) was a short war between Japan and China that officially began on January 28, 1932 with Japanese carrier aircrafts bombing Chinese controlled areas of Shanghai. The war only lasted until early March.

12. Iwamura Masashi, "Shashin Shūhō ni Miru Minkan Bōkū," 115–16.

13. The Air Defense Division of the Home Ministry was mainly responsible for officially disseminating information on "air defense thought."

14. Posters prepared based on this exhibition can be viewed at the National Archives Digital Archive website: <http://www.digital.archives.go.jp/gallery/view/category/categoryArchivesEn/0700000000/default> (Accessed 30 July 2013).

15. In 1938, it had a weekly circulation of 90,000, in 1940 170,000, and by 1943 500,000. Earhart, 99, 7–9. Following this, different government entities launched more specialized magazines to focus on particular aspects of civil defense such as *Kokumin Bōkū* (*Citizens' Air Defense*), a monthly edited by the Military Authority for Central Japan, which was launched on July 24, 1939. The government also issued a series of civil air defense manuals, which were handed out to all neighborhood associations. Iwamura, 128. For example, Naimusho Keikakukyoku, ed., *Kokumin Bōkū Dokuhon* (Tokyo: Dai Nippon Bōkū Kyōkai, 1941).

16. *Shashin Shūhō* 136, 2 October 1940, covered the bombing of London. *Shashin Shūhō* 184, 3 September 1941, was a special issue on urban air defense. In early September 1941, the national citizenry performed a comprehensive air defense drill. Iwamura, 120–122. For an in-depth discussion of the Doolittle raid see, Carroll Glines, *Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders* (Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1964), 328–41.

17. Such as the *Shashin Shūhō* 88, August 1939, special issue on defense drills that employed the slogan "Raise the public to prepare against the sky." After the Doolittle raids, *Shashin Shūhō* extensively featured images of bombs and bombings, as well as sporadic coverage of civil air defense in issues: 227, 1 July 1942, 20–21; 261, 3 March 1943, 3–11; 318, 26 April 1944, 4–5; *Shashin Shūhō* 283, 4 August 1943, was a special photographic handbook dedicated to explaining civil air defense strategies. Gas masks appear in several of these issues, but just as one tool among many in strategic air defense.

18. *Shashin Shūhō* 184, 3 September 1941, 2–3. Reproduced in Earhart, 120.

19. Earhart, 119, 76–78. The new Civil Air Defense Law that had just been promulgated on August 16, 1941 articulated the four critical new policies that manifested this cultural transformation culminating at the turn of the decade: 1) every person without exception was a soldier in the fight to protect the country (*kokudo*); 2) without concern for individuals or individual property, everyone should work together and sacrifice to minimize the general loss of life and property; 3) everyone should defend his or her post to the death; 4) no matter how frightened one became, one should not panic or scream, but work in silence and remember the mutual love between neighbors working for the greater good of the country (Iwamura, 123). In November the law was revised. In mid-1943, *Shashin Shūhō* featured a pictorial homage to the “brilliant unswervingly loyal military deeds” of the special attack units (*Tokubetsu Kōgekитай* or kamikaze) that had given their lives for the sacred war (*Shashin Shūhō* 267, 14 April 1943, 4–5). The term *gyokusai* came into popular usage after the reported mass suicide attack of Japanese soldiers engaged in battle on the Island of Attu in the Aleutian Archipelago in May 1943. For a discussion of the “kamikazefication of the home front,” see Earhart, 409–59. Not until September 1943 did the government began making urgent calls for evacuation of the cities, but only a small percentage of the population heeded these calls, and primarily school children were evacuated. Cary Karacas, *Tokyo from the Fire: War, Occupation, and the Remaking of a Metropolis* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2006), 69–81.

20. The major shift from emphasis on poison gas bombs to incendiary bombs was based on the largely unsubstantiated claims that poison bombs would not be used, although their varieties were still detailed (Iwamura, 125).

21. As Karacas notes, the tenor of Unno’s novels on air raids changed during the course of the 1930s, focusing increasingly on the importance of civil air defense preparation. Despite their own concerns about preparedness, Japanese military officials felt that Unno’s work alarmed the public about the potential for attack and ordered him to stop. By the late 1930s this popular genre disappeared (Karacas, 39–53).

22. This special issue was published right around the time of the Shanghai Incident and took up a range of military themes related to Japan’s international standing (and increasing diplomatic isolation) in the world, including the possibility of the nation going to war. Several articles discussed the 1931 Manchurian Incident or Mukden Incident (*Manshū Jihen*) that was the pretext for Japan’s invasion and occupation of North China (Manchuria), which was heavily criticized by the international community.

Another article specifically addressed the possibility of Tokyo being bombed by air. *Hanzai Kagaku*, special issue, March 1932. I am grateful to Mark Driscoll for bringing this issue to my attention and for lending me his copy.

23. Any readers familiar with military uniforms or who looked at the photographs of World War I British soldiers featured in the issue would have known that this figure was not Japanese.

24. Quoted in Silverberg, 118.

25. Silverberg, 110

26. Silverberg, 299, n. 6.

27. *Shashin Shūhō* 36, 19 October 1938, inside back cover. This advertisement is illustrated in Earhart, 99.

28. Horino Masao also produced a photograph of the parade of Members of the Association of Imperial Army Dogs with gas masks see, *Horino Masao, Nihon no Shashinka* 12 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), plate 50. For the dog with gas mask cartoon, see “Kagakusen to Inutachi—Sono Ichi,” <http://ameblo.jp/wa500/theme-10017409731.html>.

29. I am grateful to Ryan Holmberg for bringing numerous examples to my attention.

30. The 1936 campaign was timed around September 18, the anniversary of the Manchurian Incident (*Manshū Jihen*).

31. This advertising copy reiterates the prescribed order of actions exhorted in the government’s civil air defense slogan: Air raid! Water! Gas Mask! Switch (Turn out the lights)!

32. I am deeply grateful to Morinaga & Co., Ltd., particularly Noaki Seiji and Suko Kuniko, for allowing me to study these important materials.

33. For more on Horino's work, and a complete bibliography of all works by and about him, see Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, ed., *Maboroshi Modanisuto: Shashinka Horino Masao no Sekai—Vision of the Modernist: The Universe of Photography of Horino Masao* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 2012).

34. Horino was a leading figure in the “New Photography” (*Shinkō Shashin*) movement that promoted modernist photography styles and photomontage. He was also an active commercial photographer, working for Morinaga as well as other major companies. In addition to his work as a practitioner, he was a prominent photography critic and theorist, writing actively for journals and producing several well-known monographs, including *Gendai Shashin Geijutsuron (Artistic Theories of Contemporary Photography)*, vol. 10, *Shin Geijutsuron Shisutemu* (Tokyo: Tenjinsha, 1930) and the modernist tour de force that extolled the “machine aesthetic” (*kikai bigaku*), *Kamera meXtetsu Kōsei (Camera, Eye x Steel, Composition)* (Tokyo: Mokuseisha Shoin, 1932).

35. *Hanzai Kagaku* is available in facsimile form; *Hanzai Kagaku*, vols. 1–21 (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 2007).

36. *Hanzai Kagaku* 3, no. 9, September 1932.

37. Anne Tucker et al., *The History of Japanese Photography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, in association with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2003).

38. David Ambaras, “Topographies of Distress: Tokyo, c. 1930” in *Noir Urbanisms*, ed. Gyan Prakash (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010): 190–191.

39. According to Silverberg, “In May 1932, the obsession with *ero* in *Eiga no Tomo* was projected onto battle in the account about war in the air and the bombing of Shanghai” (Silverberg, 122–123). Seven movies were also made about the three valorous bombs. Tokyo did ultimately experience a devastating series of aerial bombings by American B-29 bombers on March 9 and 10, 1945, known as the Great Tokyo Air Raids (*Tōkyō Daikūshū*), which incinerated half of the city and killed over 100,000 people.