she "tried to frame beauty as a broader concept" (109) and became one of the first women in show business to publicly espouse delight in her voluptuous figure. Her vast repertoire ranged from scintillating songs about love and sex to aching standards like "Some of These Days" and "My Yiddish Momme," which Tucker sang in memory of her mother but which also resonated deeply with audiences around the world.

"Few entertainers conceptualized their historical context as much as she did" (191), writes Sklaroff, who examines Tucker's life almost as if it were a time capsule of each decade she lived through. An esteemed scholar of American cultural history (whose previous work includes *Black Culture and the New Deal: The Quest for Civil Rights in the Roosevelt Era*), Sklaroff does much to situate Tucker within the fabric of the twentieth century. By looking at her life through an ethnographic lens, she draws parallels between the cultural landscape and the arc of Tucker's life, from the women's suffrage movement and World War I to the dawn of the recording industry and the sexual revolution in the latter half of the century. One gets the sense that it's in making these comparisons that Sklaroff feels most at home and most passionate.

However, one of my favorite Sklaroff anecdotes—which I found to be as telling as any of those concerning her subject's character—references a moment in February 1932. Just as vaudeville was taking its last breath before being replaced by the allure of movie houses, Tucker was performing at the famed Palace Theater in New York (an old haunt for her) when the backstage caught fire. Although she was terrified, rather than panic and flee along with the seventeen hundred patrons, Tucker tried to calm the audience and assuage their fears by singing. As always, her primary interest was in making her audience feel at ease. That was who she was.

A complex woman of many contradictions, she wasn't a feminist hero or a pioneer in a traditional sense—"The greatest obstacle to my success as a woman is my success as an entertainer" (93), she once remarked—but she was a consummate performer and a beacon for what a woman in that time could achieve. A workhorse of an entertainer, she loved what she did, never simply for the money or the fame, but for the love of the act. For Tucker, "retire" was such a cursed word that even on her deathbed, the letterhead on her stationery purportedly read: "Sophie Tucker . . . Working at Home . . . Not Retired" (211).

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BOOK DATA Lauren Rebecca Sklaroff, *Red Hot Mama: The Life of Sophie Tucker*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018. $27.95 cloth. 302 pages.

LINDA EHRLICH

Tanaka Kinuyo: Nation, Stardom, and Female Subjectivity edited by Irene González-López and Michael Smith

This collection of essays offers long-overdue attention to Japanese actress/director Tanaka Kinuyo (1909–77). Over her fifty-two-year career, Tanaka appeared in approximately 250 films and directed six features from 1953 to1962. The essays range from an examination of Tanaka's early star image to her artistic work both with a host of directors and on her own as a pioneering director who tackled difficult subjects. Rather than searching for some essentially auteurist or feminist qualities in Tanaka's films—whether she was involved as actress, director, or both—the contributors aim to explore "her agency and voice within a specific historical and geographical context" (24). Notice that "nation" is the first word in the book's subtitle, before "stardom" or any reference to gender.

The book's preface, by Furukawa Kaoru, honorary president of the Tanaka Kinuyo Memorial Hall in her hometown of Shimonoseki, pays tribute to Tanaka's tenacity in the face of obstacles. (Despite his eloquence, Furukawa includes an unfortunate comparison to Leni Riefenstahl.) The two editors offer an introductory chapter intriguingly entitled *Onna monogatari* ("Tale of a Woman"), calling to mind *Genji monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*). They recount how, after her father's death, the young Kinuyo moved with her mother and some of her siblings to Osaka to live with their mother's brother. Tanaka's star turn as a *biwa* (Japanese lute) performer, from an early age, allowed her to support her family economically. This trend continued (problematically) throughout her life.

After she entered the world of the cinema at the age of fourteen, Tanaka was first contracted to the Shōchiku Studio for twenty-six years in "chaste traditional woman" roles (8). She starred in silent films and in Japan's first "talkie," *Madamu to nyōbu* (*The Neighbor's Wife and Mine*, 1931). González-López and Smith contrast her early screen persona with that of her American counterpart, the vampish Clara Bow. Tanaka was born into a time when the slogan *ryōsai kenbo* ("good wife, wise mother") was considered the norm. She excelled at first in the *shōshimingeki* genre of "domestically set dramas designed to appeal to a predominantly female audience" (6) and, during the war, participated in several propagandistic films

As many of the contributors note, Tanaka's performances themselves helped to problematize the limited view of women in Japanese society. Tanaka managed to "represent

the idealized Japanese woman while at the same time challenging the logic behind it" (101), as one contributor observes, and she approached female issues with "ferocity" (16). Lauri Kitsnik's chapter discusses the young actress's key role as a "joint author" of the films by Gosho Heinosuke and Mizoguchi Kenji in which she starred. This richly illustrated chapter underscores film scholar Kinoshita Chika's assessment of Tanaka's style of acting: her fluid way of walking, her restless gestures, avoidance of eye contact, and ambiguous facial expressions (59).

To these categories, Alexander Jacoby adds that of "touch." His intriguing essay pays particular attention to the last sequences of Tanaka's unforgettable performances in films like Kinoshita Keisuke's *Rikugun* (*Army*, 1944) and Mizoguchi's *Sanshō dayū* (*Sansho the Bailiff*, 1954). Jacoby asserts that the ending of Mizoguchi's *Waga koi wa moenu* (*My Love Has Been Burning*, 1949), about female activist Kishida Toshiko (1863–1901), surpasses Ibsen's *A Doll's House* in its ending. Using *Rikugun* as a key example, Jacoby notes how "Tanaka's presence and performances . . . trouble and undermine the explicit, endorsed meaning of the film" (70) and offer an implied critique of the militaristic system underlying the film. Like many fine actors, Tanaka Kinuyo became a palimpsest of her varied roles—the tomboy, "maternal child woman," long-suffering mother, prostitute, and so on.

Tanaka's connection to Mizoguchi began with a film that is regrettably lost, *Naniwa onna* (*Woman of Osaka*, 1940), with a Bunraku puppet theme. Michael Smith's chapter offers an insightful analysis of *Waga koi wa moenu*, following up on Jacoby's lead. With a screenplay written by activist (director) Shindō Kaneto, the film advocates grassroots education for women, and thus conforms to Occupation-period ideology. While several authors note that most English-language writing on the actress has focused on her films with Mizoguchi, it is a shame there is no chapter that highlights and provides an overview of her extraordinary performances in eleven of Mizoguchi's films.

Tanaka's last screen performance, at the age of sixty-four, was in Kumai Kei's *Sandakan #8* (1974), playing an elderly *ianfu* ("comfort woman" or sex slave) in Malaysia during World War II. Based on two novels by the female writer Yamazaki Tomoko, this film, which is not readily available in the United States, shows Tanaka at her most "ferocious," in a performance that is an indictment of Japanese societal hypocrisy toward women. Tanaka won a Best Actress Award at the Berlin Film Festival and in the Kinema Junpo ratings.

The book's four chapters devoted to Tanaka as director cover the six films she directed in the order in which they were made. She was the only Japanese woman making feature films during the postwar classical era, a period of "immense sociopolitical importance for women" (16–17). It is amazing to learn that Tanaka herself devoted only three pages of her memoir to her role as a director.

In their jointly written chapter, González-López and Ashida Mayu explore Tanaka's "limited but greatly diverse filmography" (105), paying special attention to the promotion and reception of the films she directed. At the time of the release of her first film, *Koibumi* (*Love Letter*, 1953), its treatment of the "victimization discourse" (110) in postwar Japan made it especially timely. Intriguingly, the authors refer to this film as a "male melodrama" in which the character of Reikichi (Mori Masayuki), a traumatized returnee from the war, grows to understand how his former girlfriend Michiko (Kuga Yoshiko) also suffered from the war.

It is true that Tanaka's first two films were written by men—*Koibumi* is based on a novel by Niwa Fumio with script by Kinoshita Keisuke, and *Tsuki wa noborinu* (*The Moon Has Risen*, 1955) is a "home drama" written by Ozu Yasujiro and given to Tanaka to direct. The authors are quick to point out that the last third of *Tsuki wa noborinu* departs from Ozu's aesthetics.

The next three Tanaka films, however, were based on original stories or original screenplays by female writers, and the last film, *Ogin-sama* (*Love under the Crucifix*, 1962), also had female producers. Alejandra Armendáriz-Hernández explains how the relatively obscure film *Ruten no ōhi* (*The Wandering Princess*, 1960) marked the second phase of Tanaka's directorial career. It was the first time that Tanaka filmed in color and wide-screen (called Daieiscope at the time). It was also the first time that Tanaka did not appear in front of the camera in one of her own films. Armendáriz-Hernández's carefully researched essay convincingly shows how *Ruten no ōhi* is located "in-between the melodramatic film tradition of Japanese victimization (*higaisha ishiki*) and colonial nostalgia, and the representation of the new (female) subjectivity" (156).

Onna bakari no yoru (*Girls of Dark*, 1961)—again a collaboration among women—is about former street prostitutes ("pampan") and the correctional facilities in which they sometimes found themselves. It is based on the 1960 novel *Michi aredo* (*There Is a Way But . . .*) by the female writer Yana Masako (1911–86). This film also has one of the earliest representations in Japanese cinema of a lesbian relationship—notably, one that isn't shown either as a schoolgirl romance or as pornography. *Onna bakari no yoru* is also distinctive in that it lacks a noble father, or lover, figure and also that it does not end with a utopian sense of female solidarity.

Tanaka Sumie, the female screenwriter for Tanaka's third directorial production, *Chibusa no eien nare* (*The Eternal Breasts*, 1955), about the female poet Nakajo Fumiko, also wrote the script for *Onna bakari no yoru*. In her chapter on the "two Tanakas," Ayako Saito explains in detail how the two women worked together, and how Tanaka Kinuyo "visually foreground[ed] female interrelationships" in Tanaka Sumie's screenplay (136). *Chibusa no eien nare* does not shy away from the theme of breast cancer, and what Saito notes is the "prohibition against looking" (*miruna no kinshi*) in Japanese society, identified by psychoanalyst Kitayama Osamu, drawing on Japanese fairy-tale motifs (143–44). For the film, Tanaka rewrote the ending of *Onna bakari no yoru* to highlight the protagonist's sense of empowerment.

Upon reading these chapters, two overarching threads emerge: first, an appreciation for this act of "recovery" of a key figure in the history of Japanese cinema; and second, a regret that Tanaka's own directorial works are not readily available to the public. Let's hope this volume will inspire a wider distribution of her films—both her own work as a director, and the less-available films in which she appeared, like *Waga koi wa moenu*. Taken together, these essays offer praise for a woman—already highly successful as an actress—who claimed her own authorship as a director and continued to grow as an actress as she aged. She is the key example of how directing is not (as had been assumed in Japan) a "man's work." Since 1983, the Mainichi Film Awards' Tanaka Kinuyo Award has been presented to an actress with a long, successful career. Her legacy stands. As someone who refused to be pigeonholed, and who took considerable chances, she blazed a strong trail for others to follow.

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BOOK DATA Irene González-López and Michael Smith, eds., *Tanaka Kinuyo: Nation, Stardom, and Female Subjectivity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018. £75.00 cloth, £75.00 e-book. 232 pages.

CATHERINE CLEPPER

Bright Signals: A History of Color Television by Susan Murray

Susan Murray's new history of color television, *Bright Signals*, feels by turns both familiar and original as it chronologically traces the evolution of TV color technology from its first laboratory demonstrations (1928) to the point at which color became an assumed quality of the medium (1970). Its pages are filled with a cast of motley international inventors, tales of network rivalry, eye-popping archival images from vintage advertisements, and screenshots from lavish early color productions. Indeed, in a different format, it is easy to imagine *Bright Signals* as a tasteful addition to any midcentury coffee table.

Although Murray's book owes a debt to earlier works on color, design, and technological change, *Bright Signals* successfully adds to those conversations by demonstrating the television industry's particular deployment of color within a highly regulated and hierarchical network system. As the first full-length treatment of televisual color, *Bright Signals* offers a contribution to the field that is bound to be significant; however, the book truly shines as a paradigmatic example of what Rick Altman has called "crisis historiography" by employing an approach that emphasizes the potentiality of new media while ultimately underscoring industry's investment in stabilizing its identity and maximizing its profitability.[1]

To Murray's great credit, *Bright Signals* is a joy to read: it is meticulously researched, rhetorically lucid, and refreshingly jargon free. Beyond the book's delightful illustrations, the text of *Bright Signals* paints a vivid picture of the personalities and corporate campaigns most responsible for introducing color to the small screen. The first chapter introduces the reader to the global network of patent holders and engineers who helped envision color as part of television's "predestined" development (14). The chapter emphasizes the rival systems of Scottish engineer John Logie Baird—a tinkerer whose sheer volume of ideas places him in the company of Hugo Gernsback or Nikolai Tesla— and Bell Labs' Herbert E. Ives, both demonstrated at the close of the 1920s, and also establishes the technical difficulty, perceptive subjectivity, and sociohistorical specificity baked into the idea of "natural color."

Among the moving and still images included in Ives's June 1929 demo of his "beam scanning" method of color transmission were a waving American flag, a young female dancer bathed in blue light and playing with a strand of red beads, and a color photo of Al Jolson in blackface singing "Sonny Boy" (21). While the flag and dancer demonstrate the system's capacities for representing bright primary colors, the inclusion of Jolson in blackface exhibits a decidedly unnatural shade that, Murray argues, primarily served to align the project of colorizing television with the earlier successes of film sound. While cardinal red, royal blue, and darkest black may have provided striking imagery for Ives's