This dissertation explores the practice of writing women into history as part of feminist practice. My immediate area of study is with the large number of writers who adopted narratives as a subject-constitutive method in placing women in history in the post-1945 period. Marked as an “urgent” task, writing new history occupied a privileged position in a teleological narrative of emergent democratic development. Women were particularly important at the outset because of the relatively few works of history that included women produced prior to 1945. Moreover, as subjects with new political status they . In practice, writing the subject “women” into teleological narrative often meant, writing women’s history as Bildungsroman. In particular, I consider the ways in which prostitution, modernity, discourses of nationalism, and the (emerging) political subjectivity of women grounded the practice. I take, as a point of departure, the figure of native women, imagined to have hailed from the countryside and marked as embodying an un-modernized subjectivity. These women migrated to the urban centers and occupied an important place in the emergent discourse of Japanese feminism as sexually marginal and aberrant subjects (not true feminist subject) and as sexual victims of imperialism (proper subject of feminism.) Marked by the national and occupation discourses, the power of “women as subject” relied, precisely in
part, on “women as simulacrum of democratic being.” This framing, rather than opening up possibilities for assemblages and previously unknown alignments, occlude the history of uneven development. My reading of this material invites a direction towards a history practice of non-containment. The large volume of texts provide a rich field in which to question what it would mean to avoid making sense of the past and to tease out a practice of fragmented and incomplete history towards an indeterminate future.