

THE PINK BOOK

THE JAPANESE PRODUCTION AND ITS CONTEXTS

Edited by Abé Mark Nornes

The Pink Book

The Japanese Eroduction and its Contexts

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"Shall We F***?: Note on Parody in the Pink," in *Scope:
An Online Journal of Film Studies*, Julian Stringer.
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"The Japanese Pink Film: All Jargon and No Authenticity,"
in *Bright Lights Film Journal*, Andrew Grossman.
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A Kinema Club Book
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Acknowledgements

Thanks to a complicated set of circumstances, this book took far longer than it should have. I must thank the authors—this "strange collection of brains," as Adachi Masao surrealistically puts it—for their gracious patience as the process dragged on and on. Thanks to their efforts, particularly their revisions based on strong feedback from several anonymous reviewers, the resulting book is a wonderfully thought-provoking and heterogeneous take on the Pink Film.

I would also like to thank Linda Williams, Phil Hallman, Peter Alilunas, Aaron Gerow and the Kinema Club editorial collective for their support.

I feel particularly indebted to Michael Arnold, who is writing a dissertation on this topic. Suspicious of received wisdom, his refreshingly novel perspective on the Pink Film has taught me much. He also contributed a thoroughgoing edit of the final manuscript. Both he and Irhe Sohn were incredibly helpful in the final stages of this DIY publication.

This book was years in the making, and was marked with a rough synchronicity with the 50th year of Pink Film. In the course of its preparation, we've seen many veteran producers, directors, staff members and actors pass away. Among the directors I immediately think of are Nogami Masayoshi, Watanabe Mamoru, Ueno Toshiya, and Sakamoto Futoshi.

Beyond these names, I must single out two friends. Donald Richie was one of the first people I brought into the project. He was delighted by the invitation, and had plans to write an essay about the transformations he witnessed in the Pink reception context over the course of his lifetime. The other friend was Wakamatsu Koji, who surely has the longest index entry here. As the book took its leisurely course to completion, I regularly checked in Wakamatsu-san. This was usually over Sore Kara shochu at Gingakei in Golden-gai (occasionally joined by Adachi Masao, another of our great supporters). It is painful to think about how neither Wakamatsu nor Richie—with their utterly different relationships to Pink—were able to hold the book in their hands.

—AMN

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The Pink Book: Introduction

Abé Mark Nornes

Sitting in a theater like the Senbon Nikkatsu, one senses the musty entirety of Japanese cinema history.¹ It is located in a nondescript Kyoto neighborhood just north of Nijo Castle, the 17th century palace of the Tokugawa Shogunate. This is a theater with a history like no other. Originally named the Senbonza, it was built in 1901 on the family land of Makino Shozo, the man often called the father of Japanese cinema. He ran it with his mother, staging performances of both live theater and films. It was the theater troupe of the Senbonza that Makino mobilized when he made his first film in 1908. The following year he shot the great Onoe Matsunosuke's first film, *Goban Tadanobu* (1909), on the grounds of neighboring Daichoji Temple. Seventeen years and hundreds of films later, Matsunosuke's funeral procession passed the Senbonza.

This area was one of the pleasure districts of Kyoto. People would stroll the streets—this even had a name: “*senbura*”—stopping in the Senbonza or one of the other 20 nearby movie theaters. There were other pleasures to be had as well. If you take a *senbura* today, one sees traces of this past. There is a famous restaurant specializing in the aphrodisiac turtle soup, and the occasional home has a second story of all windows—the better to call in male customers in the glory days of the neighborhood—and of course there is the Senbon Nikkatsu theater.

After the formation of Nikkatsu a century ago in 1912, the Senbonza came under studio management and changed its name to the Senbon Nikkatsukan. It featured Nikkatsu product for over 70 years. However, thanks to the anti-prostitution law of 1956, the district's fortunes changed dramatically. The movie theaters disappeared along with the sex trade, and our theater moved to its current location with a new name, the Senbon Nikkatsu. The studio sloughed it off after the Roman Porno era in the 1980s and its new owners turned it into a Pink Film theater.



Figure 1: The Senbon Nikkatsu Theater in Kyoto.

Today the Senbon Nikkatsu is not only the last theater in the district, but it is also one of two remaining Pink theater in the old capital (Fig. 1; the other theater is the Honmachikan). The exterior is moldy, the marquee in tatters. Posters decorate the exterior, featuring crazy titles and half-naked starlets with “come and get it” pouts. The lobby is filled with unused furniture and assorted junk, but the entrance fee is only 500 yen for a triple feature. The latest Hollywood product on the other side of town costs three times as much. The carpet is long gone. On either side of the auditorium no smoking signs blaze away, blissfully ignored by half the patrons. The drab curtain, always open now, has an embroidered advertisement for a local traditional inn with an ancient four-digit phone number. But when the lights dim, the screen lights up in glorious 35mm—one of the hallmarks of the Pink Film.

One can palpably feel the whole of Japanese cinema history inscribed in this space, 100 years after the founding of Nikkatsu and precisely 50 years after the appearance of the Pink Film itself. The signs of decline are hard to miss...but also easy to miss in another sense. Here is a quote from a book

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cataloguing Japan's disappearing Pink theaters, the author waxing nostalgically over the fate of the Senbon Nikkatsu and its filmmakers.

There is a film I fondly remember. The theater I saw Oshima Nagisa's *Cruel Story of Youth* (*Seishun zangoku monogatari*, 1960) in was the Senbon Nikkatsu. In those days the Senbon Nikkatsu was a mainstream theater, but today is changed into an adult theater. Nishijin had seven movie theaters, but today all that's left is the Senbon Nikkatsu and the Nishijin Theater [The latter has since closed down.—AMN] Just as *Cruel Story of Youth* stole the hearts of young people, *Starting Off at 20* (*Hatachi no genten*, 1973) also had the support of youth in the 1970s, and was even written by a student from nearby Ritsumeikan University. In some sense, it became something of a bible for young people. In some sense, Pink Films are also a treasury of youth films. I want more films made that turn on the youth of Kyoto. For Pink Film fans as well, go Pinks! Go Senbon Nikkatsu!²

Why cheer on the Pinks like this? What's to lose in the end? For this particular author, it is surely wrapped up in fond memories of the sexual charge electrifying the films of his adolescence. This is a sentiment clearly shared by this volume's Kimata Kimihiko, who offers a local history of Pink Film from the perspective of his hometown of Nagoya. What of the other authors represented here? Why write about the Pink Film and why *now*?

The latter question has one initial, easy answer, and this also offers an opportunity to define some terms. It is that the Pink Film seems to be nearing the end of its half-century run. Some people collapse all sexually explicit filmmaking into the Pink category, but we will use it in a very precise sense: Pink Film is the soft-core, independent cinema of Japan. It started half-a-century ago with the film *Market of Flesh* (*Nikutai ichiba*, 1962). Pink experienced several iterations as it dealt with competition from both studio soft core and hard core adult video (popularly known as AV). But Pink Film is resolutely independent. It constitutes a parallel industry, with its own production companies, theater chains, actors and staff. Its sex is simulated; as Tsuda Ichiro's photographs playfully reveal, the actors use *maebari* pads to cover their genitals. The films are resolutely narrative and, perhaps most interestingly, they are shot and exhibited on 35mm to this very day. The devotion to

large format celluloid has demanded sacrifice. The original 3 million yen budget has not risen for decades, while the shooting schedules have shortened to three or four days. Sound is entirely post-recorded, and censorship of genitalia is performed during shooting to save money—for example, the cinematographer will hold a little lens on a wand in a strategic spot before the camera to avoid costly mosaic or blurring. Finally, Pink Films are made for theaters, not home video; some are now available on video, but walk into a typical video store and that big back room will stock only AV.

And so why a book on Pink Film today? Perhaps one reason for this timing is its apparent demise. By all measures Pink is on its knees, with only one studio regularly producing films and for only a couple dozen theaters—there used to be hundreds of films distributed to hundreds of theaters. This, along with a neat half-century history, give the Pink Film a convenient coherence for the historian. What better time to look back than when things are wrapping up? However, the motives and energies behind *The Pink Book* are far more complex than this. Because the subject is pornographic, those writing about Pink Film will almost always feel compelled to position themselves in relation to their object. Sometimes, it is a defensive position, but not always. In contrast to uninhibited “users” like Donald Richie or Kimata, most authors deliver, explicitly or implicitly, justifications for the attention they lavish on the Pinks. Here are a few that typically come up.

- Pink is important because it is there—an adequate accounting has yet to be made, so this history must be uncovered. Jasper Sharp took an important first step with *Behind the Pink Curtain*, and in this volume Roland Domenig and Kimata Kimikihiko follow his lead.
- Pink Film is also important because its scale cannot be ignored. This output is probably significant enough to affect economies of scale in the production of stock and cost of lab work.
- Pink Film is important because after the collapse of the studio system it came to serve as a training ground for filmmakers, from editors to directors. Until the 1970s filmmakers would learn their craft on the job. Cinematographers, for example, would train their assistants gradually, learning trick of the trade as they gained their master’s trust. Directors took incredibly competitive entrance exams, and then put in their time as assistant directors; they wouldn’t pick up the megaphone

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Figure 2: Shot just after the start of the Iraq War, a televisual George Bush telepathically molests a woman being pursued by the North Koreans in Meike Mitsuru's *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai*.

until they had directed the trailers for their masters' films. When this system collapsed, many ambitious filmmakers began their careers in the ultra-low budget Pink arena, moving on to the mainstream whenever they got the chance. These include major filmmakers like Wakamatsu Koji, Kurosawa Kiyoshi, Sudo Masayuki, Zeze Takahisa, and Takita Yojiro—familiar faces at Cannes, Venice, Berlin and the Academy Awards.

- Pink Film is important because those same directors could let their imaginations run wild, tempered only by the severe restrictions of their miniscule budgets. Producers were generally happy to hand over the money in return for a 60-minute film sprinkled liberally with sex scenes. How those sexual acts were strung together had little relation to box office. Directors took the responsibility for cost over-runs and received remarkable freedom in exchange. They could experiment with narrative, theme, cinematography and editing in ways that were unimaginable in the studios. As Aaron Gerow suggested, the Pink Film “is almost an ironic epitome of the director system.”³ In the 1960s, this was the entry ticket for an experimental filmmaker and political activist like Adachi Masao, who eventually joined the Red Army and spent decades with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Pales-

tine in Lebanon. By the 1980s film student cineastes like Sudo Masayuki, whose mentor was the powerful scholar Hasumi Shigehiko, were producing clever Pink Films like the Ozu parody *Julian Stringer* analyzed in these pages. This was something of a free space where talented artists could accomplish unique and compelling films that would otherwise never be made.

- The Pink Film is important because that unusual freedom enabled a surprising political appropriation of the Pinks. This is often associated with Wakamatsu Koji, whose own definition of Pink pretty much sums up this approach: “Movies can’t really be called ‘Pink’ if they are being accepted by the general public. They’ve always got to be guerilla. Pink Films are about putting it out there in the public’s face and smashing people’s minds.”⁴ Wakamatsu was the pioneer, but subsequent filmmakers like Zeze Takahisa took up his mantle when the senior director went mainstream and Adachi Masao left for Lebanon. This aspect of Pink Film has attracted the most scholarly attention, and is well-represented here by Sharon Hayashi and Furuhashi Yuriko. Miryam Sas also examines Hamano Sachi’s self-described feminist appropriation of Pink, and Andrew Grossman turns an unusually skeptical eye on the politicality of filmmakers like Zeze.
- Pink Film is important because it is a rich field for studying representations of sexuality, particularly the intersection between sex and politics. Of course, sex has long been an attraction of the Japanese cinema for foreigners, from orientalist fantasy to feminist theorization. It is surely a major reason filmmakers like Oshima and Imamura received so much critical attention. They offered an eminently adult and complex exploration of sexuality compared to other filmmakers in the Asian region, where sex was either rendered with adolescent embarrassment or censored to near oblivion. Thanks to the factors outlined above, the Pink Film often thematizes sex, something explored here by many of the authors, especially Richie, Hayashi, and Furuhashi.
- Finally, the Pink Film is important because it has been at the forefront of most of the postwar battles over film censorship. In *The Pink Book*, Kirsten Cather gives a definitive accounting of the court cases centered on the Pinks, performing original research based on actual court records.

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These are the typical reasons people offer up when positioning themselves in relation to their Pink object of study. To this we would have to add the varied pleasures of the films themselves, which deploy every genre of the mainstream—from thrillers to musicals—and, of course, one must not forget the sex. At the same time, there is one other factor behind my own decision to edit this book now: Pink Film has, for many foreign audiences and programmers, come to stand in as *the* image of contemporary Japanese film itself.

Any national cinema context is filled with a wide variety of genres and modes of production. However, it is rare that popular local films reach foreign audiences. This is particularly true of Asian cinema, where foreign programmers and distributors generally concentrate on art cinema to the exclusion of documentary, tear jerkers, amateur films, pot-boilers, experimental work, musicals or, especially, pornography. Japan has historically been one of the largest and most complex film cultures since the 1920s. Scholars are still mining unexplored areas of this history. The Japanese Pink Film was on the film world's radar early on, thanks primarily to the programming of Wakamatsu's films by European festivals in the early 1960s. It helped that a film like *Secret Acts Behind Walls* (*Kabe no naka no himegoto*, 1965) was scandalous even by European standards.

Wakamatsu arrived on the scene as the world took notice of the New Wave directors and the explosion of creative, independent filmmaking that followed in their wake. Through the 1960s and 1970s, Japanese cinema became known for its New Wave, broadly construed so as to include a few Pink directors, and the so-called Golden Age that preceded it. When Noël Burch wrote *To the Distant Observer* in 1971, a forceful critique of that “Golden Era,” he celebrated the neglected prewar era by linking it to the excesses of Oshima, Wakamatsu and others. Burch exemplifies the Pink approach that highlights leftist political appropriations of Pink. At the same time, he was skeptical of the Pink Film itself, offering the following definition in a footnote: “The Eroductio[n] is an ‘independent’ distribution system supplied by specialized ‘independent’ companies who have been cashing in on the strategy of ‘sexual liberation’ applied by the ruling classes of most capitalist countries.”²⁵ For Burch, the Pink Film amounted to a “relatively profitable ‘gutter’” from which Wakamatsu was saved by Oshima.

Burch covers Wakamatsu's work because of the political commitment they share. One strain of Japanese cinema historiography does dismiss (or simply ignore) the Pink Film because of an aversion to wading in that Pink gutter. Donald Richie ignored it completely in his 1971 *Japanese Film and National Character* (as we'll see, he was more a fan of the theaters than the movies themselves). He and Joseph Anderson did mention Pink Film in their 1980s update of *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry*, acknowledging its role as an incubator for talent while dismissing it on grounds of "quality."⁶ David Desser follows suit in *Eros Plus Massacre*, attending to political Pink (Takechi, Wakamatsu) while resolutely excluding the rest.

Thanks to Pink Film's earthy nature this position continues to the present day, although few historians can exclude it altogether because its growing visibility on the festival circuit demands acknowledgement. Isolde Standish is typical. One of her major scholarly interests has to do with representations of the body and masculinity. Therefore, for her 2006 *A New History of Japanese Cinema*, one would expect a "new history" to account for a body of film pivoting precisely on writhing naked bodies and constituting half to two-thirds of the national output in the last decades of the 20th century. But for Standish the achievements of the avant-garde cinema in countering wartime deployments of the human body were "co-opted and in many ways perverted by both the emergence of independent, exploitative 'Pink' films and the major studios that sought to temporarily sustain a declining industry through the production of 'erotic' films."⁷ No doubt, this is in many ways the case; however, Standish cites no specific titles, so it is unclear what or how much she has seen. At the very least, this was a missed opportunity to offer a new history of Japanese film, something *The Pink Book* tries to remedy in its own modest way.

What if one actually watches the films, analyzing them and exploring the contexts of their production and reception? The first English-language scholar to do so was, interestingly enough, Donald Richie. His essay, "The Japanese Eroproduction," is reprinted here to not only to mark Richie's pioneering contribution, but also because it clearly reads as the work of a "user," as it were. As a regular patron of the circuit, he excoriates the Pink Film on ideological grounds. Rather than simply dismissing it as unartful trash, however, he takes what was probably a surprising position for readers that associate

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Richie with Kurosawa and Ozu, calling for a different kind of eroticism. More and better, not less.

Although Richie published his essay less than a decade after the Pinks' 1962 début, it wasn't until the 1990s that anyone followed his footsteps and actually bought a ticket and stepped into the Pink world beyond Wakamatsu. The entry point was a space opened up by the emergence of a young generation of political Pink directors, most importantly the group known as "The Four Heavenly Kings" (*Shitenno*): Sato Hisayasu, Sano Kazuhiro, Sato Toshiki, and Zeze Takahisa. The crucial difference in this case was a significant shift in the programming world. In the past, film festival programmers had no Japanese, so they were dependent on a handful of bilingual intermediaries, most notably Donald Richie, distributor Kawakita Kashiko, and critic Sato Tadao. None of these three powerful people were particularly fond of Pink Film. However, a new generation of programmers landed in Japan in the 1990s, and many were far more adventurous and often bilingual. International Film Festival Rotterdam played a particularly key role, starting with an influential sidebar of Pink Film in 1995, the Four Heavenly Kings and then many, many more filmmakers became fixtures on the festival circuit. Specialized festivals like Frankfurt's Nippon Connection and Udine's Far East Festival staged further retrospectives and filmmaker panels. These developments seem to climax at a recent Nippon Connection, where Imaoka Shinji met his future German co-producer for the *kappa* musical *Underwater Love* (*Underwater Love: Onna no kappa*, 2011), which featured collaboration with programmer/scholar Tom Mes and cinematography by none other than Christopher Doyle.

Throughout this period, the study of Japanese film also underwent a generational transformation. Porn studies was well established by this time, but none of the film scholars knew Japanese and virtually no films were subtitled. For their part, Japanese area studies scholars—particularly those from history and literature—certainly possessed the requisite language skills but were slow to pick up on the new theoretical paradigms that would draw some of them to porn. Within the interstices of these two academic spaces, a new bilingual film scholar emerged, typically trained in either film studies or Japanese history/literature or both. These scholars are well-equipped to do the kind of spade work *The Pink Book* sets out to accomplish, and they are well-represented in these pages. Their emergence points to another reason Pink

Film merits our attention: it is one of several arenas where a community of young scholars is measuring their difference to past scholarship. If one wanted to make a spectacular display of one's distance from Kawabata or Kurosawa research, what better figures are there than Adachi Masao and Suo Masayuki?

Thus, we have come to a crux of sorts in the study of Japanese cinema, of the Japanese production and of the Pink Film itself. This situation can be encapsulated in another story about a theater visit. Just this summer, I met two graduate students studying Japanese cinema. They asked me about my current research and I mentioned this book. "Oh, I saw some Pink Films," one replied excitedly. "Ah, and where was that? On video?" I asked.

"No, in the theater, and on 35mm film."

"That's great, but where exactly? Which theater?"

"The Bungeiza in Ikubukuro. They had a special retrospective."

"Then you haven't really 'seen' a Pink Film, yet. And you better go soon!"

It was, indeed, important that the student had seen the films on 35mm and in a theatrical context. The very definition of Pink Film builds medium and mode into its fabric, claiming a half-century of history and staking out a territory vis-a-vis AV. The latter is a resolutely private affair, shot and distributed and viewed on video at home and in hotels. I explained this to the students, emphasizing the extraordinary importance of the reception context for the Pinks. Encountering the Pink Film in one of the great art houses of Tokyo isn't, in a sense, "seeing" Pink Film. This is because professional programmers plucked a collection of titles they admired, and probably felt nostalgia for, and squeezed them in-between programs of mainstream features and art-house classics.

I told the students about the Pink theater I had recently visited, the Kurara Gekijo. This theater lies at the front of the old pleasure district of Kagurazaka, an area still filled with expensive *ryotei* eateries and a sprinkling of geisha. Descending down the hill from swank Kagurazaka, one enters the modest business district of Idabashi. A narrow road full of restaurants leads to the theater. Surprisingly enough—appropriately enough—the ground floor of the building is the Meigaza Ginrei Hall, an art house not unlike its



Figure 3: The Kurara Gekijo in Idabashi.

more famous cousin in Ikebukuro. Around the corner of the building is a side entrance with an ugly orange awning and the graffiti-like sign “Kurara Gekijo.” The doorway has an old hand-painted sign: “The films currently showing have been determined by Eirin to be adult films,” and then in red ink long faded to pink, “We firmly deny admission to anyone under 18 years of age.” To the right is a poster featuring a naked Kanno Shizuka lying on her back with a come hither look, *shogi* tiles on her stomach. The title of the film is *Joshinkenshi: Iroshikake midare yubi*, or *Female Sword Master: The Playful Finger Calling Forth Pleasure*. The poster’s catch copy reads: “The biggest bet! Looking forward to orgasm, I’ll shed my clothing!” It half covers two other sexy posters in the case, whose shattered glass is patched together with cellophane tape. More posters beckon from inside; *The Girl Who Can’t be Satisfied* is surrounded by more warnings, no smoking signs, and a cute cork sign that says they open at 10:15. A steep, poster-lined staircase leads to the bowels of the earth. At its foot, a discrete, waist-level ticket wicket lists surprisingly cheap tickets: 900 yen for a triple bill (half the price for the French film upstairs), 600 yen after 6:00 pm, and 300 yen for just the final film before clos-

ing, long after the last train has departed from nearby Iidabashi station. As owner Ukita Tsuneo explained to a blogger in 2003,

Yeah, our entrance fees are at the limit. It's about right because they can toss out a ¥1000 bill and still get change back. I doubt we can go much higher. This is an office district so in the old days, we can get salary man sneaking away from work, even in the middle of the day. These days that doesn't happen much. There are more important things to do.⁸

The good old days were back in the 1960s and 70s, the heyday of the Pink Cinema. When Ukita could fill all 100 or so seats and still sell standing room only tickets. However, many things changed over the years. Only the Kurara Gekijo's physical structure has not, although it most definitely shows its age in the peeling paint and the creaky seats that allow patrons to lounge back for a nap, or whatever.

After the anonymous exchange of money for ticket, one turns 180° to the entrance door, where a surprise awaits. The door spits one out right next to the screen, facing all the seats. As one's eyes adjust to the darkness a minor spectacle appears: to the left, behind a pillar, is what appears to be a small sleeping section. The main section spreads to the right hand is dotted with patrons, sitting in pairs or alone. A clutch of men stands below the projection booth, lined up behind the last row of seats.

I visited the Kurara on a fair Sunday afternoon. The theater was about half-capacity, a man at the end of the standing section wiping his hands. I took my usual seat at the end of a row, and turned to the tiny screen. It was projecting video, presumably because the ancient projectors broke one too many times.⁹ The posters outside promised a triple bill films from the production company Xces. They actually appear to be rereads from the 1980s or early 1990s, judging by the fashion and hairstyles. The DVDs and projector were of such awful quality that they look more like bad VHS dubs. The sound was so low it was a small struggle to follow the story. But that didn't seem to bother anyone, since few seemed to be actually watching the films.

In Pink theaters one cannot help but be hyper aware of one's surroundings, even vigilant. That is because there is typically a whole lot of chicanery going on, and especially at the Kurara. Typically, spectators—or should I

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Figure 4: The Okura Theater in Ueno.

render that “spectators”?—are constantly shifting seats, if they aren’t sleeping. As the film unspools one learns a few M.O.s among the audience members: the man that stops to peer down every aisle, the guy with a jingling shrine charm, the fellow that taps people from behind, the man in a ghostly white suit. It is like movie theater musical chairs. One will sit down next to another. Various signals are exchanged. On my visit a boyish, young man entered next to the screen, pausing for his eyes to adjust while the entire theater checked him out. He sat to my left and one row forward, leaving the end seat open. An oldster with an enormous beard sat down in no time and young man shifted one more seat in. Rejected, the beard got up and returned to the back wall. After a few minutes another man made an attempt, and this time there was no rebuff. Before long, his head dropped to the young man’s lap. The fellow two seats down from me sat forward and peered over the seat backs for a better view. On this afternoon I was surrounded by no less than five simultaneous blowjobs, two hand jobs, a couple masterbators, and one particularly loud snorer. I did not visit the bathrooms, but one imagines the waiting supplicants Richie describes in “Gloriole.”

The Kurara is the liveliest audience I have seen, but this is typical of all Pink theaters to one degree or another. There are little dramas both on and off the screen. This is why those students of Japanese cinema will not have “seen” a Pink Film until they visit Pink theatrical spaces and their audiences. And since theaters are closing down one after the other, it may not be long before it is no longer possible to “see” Pink Films.

At the same time, this invites us to ask what exactly the Pink Film *is* in the first place. At the present moment, the few remaining theaters are very much like the Kurara; however, Kimata Kimihiko’s essay describes a far more heterogeneous viewing context—one that clearly includes *viewing*—in the first decades of the form. Indeed, older filmmakers and fans describe a very different theatrical scene in the early days of Pink. For example, director Adachi Masao recently told me of his first encounter with Wakamatsu Koji films: “When the opportunity to work with Wakamatsu came up, I sought out his films at Pink theaters all over Tokyo. People would watch them quietly and intensely, even reverently.” It was mainly in the 1980s after the appearance of video-based AV that the Pink theaters increasingly transformed into the *bat-tenba*—literally “places where things develop”—that they are today.

With its exceedingly ephemeral archive, this history of reception will be quite a challenge for future projects on Pink. Another way of asking what Pink Film *is*, turns to form and medium. Scholars, critics, programmers and fans are clearly drawn to the Pink Film because of its commitment to narrative and creative 35mm filmmaking, some of which is quite sophisticated, and sometimes politicized. This would seem to fly in the face of our conventional understanding of porn as having overriding masturbatory function. These fans admire Pink producers’ commitment to 35mm, decades after the global porn industry shifted to video. However, what are we to make of the trend to video projection? Even Okura’s brand-new flagship theater in Ueno installed video projection (Fig. 4). Furthermore, what are we to make of a cinema where many “spectators” don’t watch the films? Jasper Sharp’s *Behind the Pink Curtain* and *The Pink Book: The Japanese Eroduction and Its Contexts* are first steps toward exploring this unique aspect of Japanese film. Thankfully, these other writers will deliver more, now that our curiosity is piqued, yet hardly sated.

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NOTES

¹ Here is the theater's website: <http://www.bbweb-arena.com/users/senbon/>. The historical background for this section is drawn from Fujioka, "Kyoto Nishijin-chiku eigakan no henkan," and Itakura and Kamiya, "Senbonza."

² Takase, *Pinku eigakan no akari*, 60-61.

³ Gerow, "Colorado Conference—Catharsis/Divorce/Sex."

⁴ D. *Outlaw Masters of Japanese Film*, 187.

⁵ Burch, *To the Distant Observer*, n. 8, 351.

⁶ Richie and Anderson, *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry*, 470.

⁷ Standish, *A New History of Japanese Cinema*, 266.

⁸ Minatomachi Cinema Street, <http://www.cinema-st.com/adalut/d004.html>. Accessed August 1, 2012.

⁹ The owner reported this problem in the 2003 blog interview, noting his repairmen had started complaining about the state of the projectors.

Market of Flesh and the Rise of the “Pink Film”

Roland Domenig

This article examines the film *Market of Flesh* (*Nikutai ichiba*), which is commonly regarded to have started the Japanese “Pink Film” (*pinku eiga*) genre, looks into the incipencies of the “Pink” labeling in Japanese cinema and explores the reasons for the emergence of the Pink Film genre. The rapid rise of independently produced “adult films” in the early 1960s was set off by the crisis of the major studios caused by plunging audiences and dwindling box office returns. The cutback of the major studio production and the subsequent changes in the exhibition circuit gave rise to an ever-increasing number of low-budget productions for a predominantly male adult audience, which came to be known as Pink Films.

1. The Demise of Shintoho and the Establishment of Okura Eiga

In 1960 the Japanese film studio system reached its zenith. In that year a record of 548 feature films hit the cinemas,¹ which at the time made Japan the country with the highest film output in the world. Japanese films cashed in 79.7% of the box-office returns and left a record-low of 20.3% for imported films. Ninety-nine percent of the Japanese films were produced and/or distributed by the major studios Shochiku, Toho, Toei, Nikkatsu, Daiei and Shintoho. Only six independent Japanese productions were released in 1960.

Two reasons were responsible for the sharp rise of 50 additional films compared to the previous year. In March 1960 Toei launched its second production arm Daini Toei (Second Toei) and raised its production to a total of 175 films. And Daiei, which in June 1959 had changed its production line to

single-bill programs with more high-profile productions, switched back to double-bill programs when it turned out that revenues were dropping because Daiei's single bill programs could not compete with the double bill programs of its competitors.

Whereas the number of films increased, the number of audiences declined sharply. The peak of attendance was reached in 1958 with 1.13 billion visitors. With TV on the rise and a boom in leisure facilities in the wake of the high economic growth, audiences did not go to the movies as often as they used to any more. In 1960 attendance figures were down to 1.01 billion with the curve showing a steep descent. The decline in attendances meant a drastic decline in revenues for the studios. Shintocho, the smallest and financially weakest of the studios suffered particularly from plunging revenues. In January, traditionally the strongest box-office month, total revenues were 247 million yen, in June they were down to 107 million yen and until December they halved to 55 million yen. Shintocho's market share dropped from 6.22% in March to 2.74% in November.²

In December 1960, Okura Mitsugi³ resigned as president of Shintocho shortly before the studio's final collapse. Okura had been appointed president of Shintocho five years before and had led the studio out of its slump by driving a cost-cutting course and switching production from artistically ambitious films to less sophisticated mass entertainment. He abolished the producer system with its preference for expensive outside directors and movie stars and relied on young directors raised within the studio. Although Okura landed in 1957 a sensational hit with the luxurious war epic *Emperor Meiji and the Russo-Japanese War (Meiji Tenno to Nichi-Ro daisenso*; director Watanabe Kunio)—this first Japanese cinemascope film⁴ broke all box-office records and drew more than 13 million visitors—Shintocho's production consisted for the greater part of low-budget program pictures—mostly horror movies, war films and lascivious fare such as the *ama eiga* about female divers.⁵

Okuras's withdrawal as president of Shintocho came after negotiations with Toei about a merger of Shintocho with the also flagging Daini Toei failed at the nick of time due to Okura's insistence on a leading position in the to-be union. When Okura tried to push a sale of Shintocho's last asset, the 14,000 square-meter studio back lot, through an extraordinary board meeting on November 28 he faced resistance from board members as well as the labor union and finally submitted his resignation on December 1, 1960.⁶

A year later, on January 1, 1962, Okura Mitsugi launched the new company Okura Eiga, which amalgamated half a dozen companies he owned or controlled. Okura Eiga incorporated Fuji Eiga, Daiwa Film as well as Nansei, Kinryu Kogyo and Taiho Kogyo. The latter three were exhibition companies owned by Okura with a total of 35 movie theaters in the Kanto region. The rental studio Fuji Eiga, which formed the core of the new company, had produced films for Shintoho on a regular basis since Okura was appointed president of Shintoho. Daiwa Film was a distribution company for imported films, which had been founded in June 1956 by the merger of four small companies (Gaiei, Toeisha, Star Film and Hansen Shokai) as a result of the finance ministry's reassignment of the film import system which was still regulated by a quota system. The merger of the four companies led to an inconsistency in management and programming and Daiwa Film soon ran into financial troubles. In order to avoid bankruptcy the company's president Tokue Seitaro turned to Okura for help. Okura bought most of the stocks and in September 1961 became new president of Daiwa Film. To many in the industry Okura's take-over of Daiwa Film came as a surprise, but his move was well calculated. At this point the production of the very ambitious war-epic *The Pacific War and Himeyuri Corps* (*Taiheiyo senso to himeyuri butai*), which was the second Japanese 70mm film, for which special equipment had to be imported from England, was well under way. Okura was hoping to land a similar success as with *Emperor Meiji and the Russo-Japanese War* and took quite a risk when he decided to go ahead with the project after quitting Shintoho. However, in order to recoup the high production costs Okura needed a distribution network. Tokue's offer came just at the right time for Okura.

In late 1961, when the six months shooting of the war spectacle came to an end, Okura started with the molding of Okura Eiga by a number of mergers—first Fuji Eiga with the second studio of Shintoho which Okura took as disbursement after his resignation from Shintoho, then with Daiwa Film and his three exhibition companies. Okura Eiga thus had a vertically integrated structure with production facilities, a distribution arm and an exhibition outlet similar to the major studios. The new company was scheduled to be inaugurated with *The Pacific War and Himeyuri Corps*. In order to not spoil the reputation of the new company which Okura aimed to position on a par with the major studios, he established another company, Kyoritsu Eiga, for the production of low-budget films for the low-end theatre market in the provinces. The first production of this new company was the film *Market of*

Flesh,⁷ which was one of the kick-offs for what eventually came to be known as the Pink Film genre.

2. *The Controversy about Market of Flesh*

On March 15, 1962, the Tokyo Police Board indicted *Market of Flesh* during screening because of scenes the authorities considered a violation of Article 174 (*kozen waisetsu*/public indecency) of the Criminal Code. Since it was the first time that the Police intervened with a film which had passed the Japanese Motion Picture Code of Ethics Committee (Eiga Rinri Iinkai, or Eirin),⁸ the incident caused considerable irritation with all parties involved. Ikeda Kazuo,⁹ the nominal head of the production company Kyoritsu Eiga, and Takeda Shun'ichi, the director of the sales department of the film's distribution company Okura Eiga, who were summoned by the police, hastily followed the demands of the police authorities and cut several scenes¹⁰ of a total length of about 1,000 feet (ca. 11 minutes) from the 56-minute long film. This in turn offended the sensibilities of Eirin, which was alarmed by the police's course of action and its nonobservance of Eirin's function and responsibility. Commentators and critics detected a violation of the freedom of speech guaranteed by the constitution and warned of a resurgence of police censorship.¹¹

On March 19, Eirin committee chairman Takahashi Sei'ichiro addressed the following request to the Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police, Hara Bunpei:

The recent action taken by your Police Board concerning a film named *Market of Flesh* is considered opposite to your usual attitude respecting our Commission, the motion picture industrial self-regulatory. It was greatly regretted that the Police Board notified producers and distributors of the result of your disposition on this film without consulting the Commission upon its deciding that this film be treated as indecent. It is our thought that proper solution must be given by mutual discussion. Exchange of views is the best method for preventing such a case in the future. We will be much obliged to

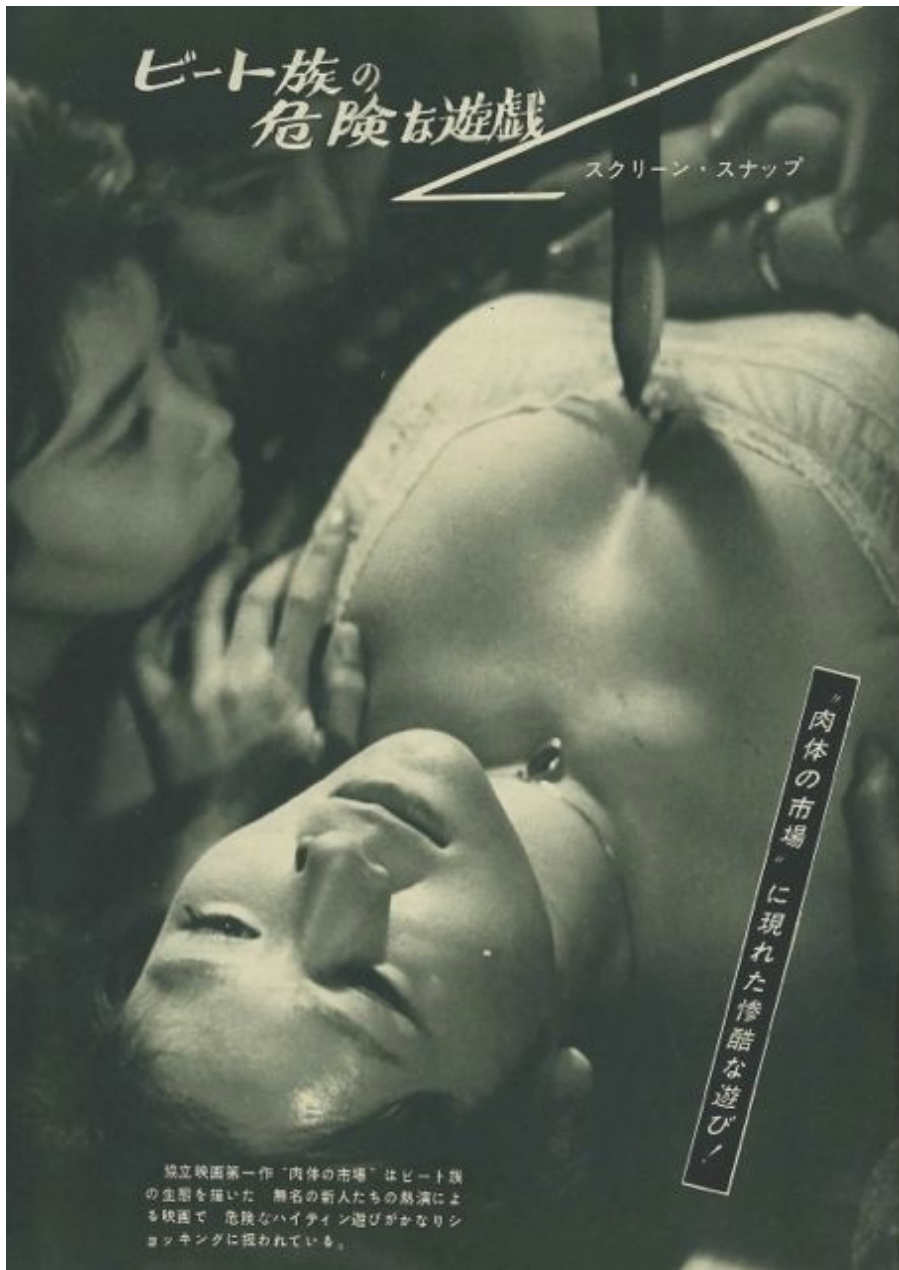


Figure 5: *Market of Flesh* (*Shukan tokushu jitsuna* [March 8, 1962]).

your careful consideration and understanding. (*ACMPCE*, 3-4).

Two days earlier, on March 17, Takahashi had issued another statement:

In reviewing this film, our Commission gave it special reconsideration since it contains several questions in its composi-

tion and expressions, although the producer's intention can be understood. Through revision applied in several points the completed film was designated an "Adult Film". I am sure that it does not come under the category of indecent films. However, I greatly regret that this film gave rise to serious trouble owing to our insufficient review. The Reviewer's self-discipline is required. The Commission intends to resolutely make efforts to attain its final goal through more careful review. It is our expectation that the producers side would kindly extend cooperation with our efforts for presenting sound films to the public audience (*ACMPCE*, 3).

Worrying about the influence of such occurrences in the future, Eirin on the one hand regretted that the Commission and the Police Board differed in opinion about the content of the film and that the latter dared to take direct steps without understanding the Commission's efforts to "improve" the film. On the other hand, the police action forced Eirin to reconsider its review practice of films and ad materials. In short *Market of Flesh* was a nuisance to both the police and Eirin.

What was the film about that caused all the trouble? The story revolves around Tamaki, a young woman whose elder sister Harue had committed suicide after being raped in the toilet of a bar shortly before her marriage. The younger sister seeks revenge and starts mingling with the clique at the bar where her sister had been raped. She falls in love with the clique's leader Kenji and by chance finds out that it was him who had raped her sister. She changes her mind about killing the man who drove her sister into suicide, but in a quarrel with an opponent Kenji is stabbed with the knife Tamaki had been carrying around to avenge her sister and dies.¹²

The police objected to six scenes in particular and had the producers cut them from the film.¹³ The first was the opening sequence in which Harue enters the ladies room of the Club Rosa where she is pinioned against the wall by Kenji, who stuffs toilet paper into her mouth to prevent her from shouting and rips her blouse open. The second sequence that had to be cut involved a lesbian scene in which the gang's female members, who are jealous of Tamaki because she has become Kenji's new darling, discipline Tamaki by undressing her and forcing her to kiss another girl. In the third scene the male group members promise Chie, the waitress of a noodle shop, to catch

and punish the girls who had skipped out on the bill. They lure Chie to a hotel room where they tell her that they will pay the bill if she does not laugh when they tickle her. If she starts giggling, however, she will get laid. They start tickling her and Chie can of course not refrain from giggling. In the fourth objected scene Tamaki for the first time visits Club Rosa where the gang usually chill out. The men make a bet that the one who within an hour comes back with the coolest car has the right to lay her first. Kenji spots a roadster and jumps into the parked car. A girl sits in the dark car, who mistakes Kenji for her boyfriend and embraces him. When the headlights of a passing car light up the interior of the roadster she recognizes that it is not her boyfriend. She pushes Kenji away, but Kenji jumps on her and kisses her wildly. The fifth scene that displeased the police was a scene in which the girls pull middle-aged men and pose for nude pictures in exchange for an adequate sum. One of the customers requests a girl to also take off her panties. She initially hesitates but then drops her panties (in the film only her silhouette is visible). In the sixth scene objected to by the police a girl is put to sleep by a sedative mixed in her drink. She is taken to a hotel room where she is stripped naked.

Except for the opening scene which judging from the available sources¹⁴ must indeed have been quite daring, the other scenes do not seem particularly hazardous compared with other Japanese films of the time. Similar scenes can already be found in the so-called *taiyozoku* films five years earlier.

The “*seisaku izu*” (film’s intention), which customarily was included in the screenplay submitted to Eirin, declared that the film’s aim was to “appeal to the young generation through a drama caused by the lack of social responsibility and sense of purpose of today’s beatnik generation (*biito-zoku*).”¹⁵ According to the film’s director Kobayashi Satoru the purpose of the film, which was based on a real life incident, was to present an undisguised portrayal of the reality of the so-called “Roppongi-zoku”, a group of urban high-teens which hung around in Roppongi and was spotlighted in the media as the epitome of Japan’s degenerated youth.

The film was shot with a budget of about 6 million yen in the studio facilities of Fuji Eiga as well as on location. On February 17 it was submitted to Eirin for final inspection and Eirin demanded several alterations before the film could finally pass. Eirin records state: “This film depicts with criticism the impulsive conduct of young people but it is in fear of causing mis-



Figure 6: Kobayashi Satoru, “the guy who picks a fight with Eirin.”

understanding among minors” (*ACMPCE*, 46). For this reason the film was classified as “*seijin eiga*”, that is to say for an adult audience only. The film opened on February 27 in four cinemas in Tokyo—the Kanda Academy Gekijo, the Shinbashi Meigaza, the Shinjuku Odeon, and the Cine Lilio in Ikebukuro—as well as in one cinema in Kawasaki.¹⁶ At the Kanda Academy Gekijo the film was shown together with two other films, the short film *Pink Midnight* (*Pinku no shin'ya*, 1962) and the feature film *The Pot and the Woman* (*Tsubo to onna*, 1962). The 17-minute long *Pink Midnight* was a striptease film—according to Eirin a “collection of show-dance scenes for adult appreciation” (*ACMPCE*, 47)—credited also to Kyoritsu Eiga.¹⁷ *The Pot and the Woman* was the unauthorized title of the French film *Manina, le fille sans voile* directed by Willy Rozier with Brigit Bardot in the lead role.¹⁸ The 1952 production had first been released in Japan in December 1959 by Daiwa Film under the title *Bikini no rajo* (*The Naked Girl in the Bikini*). All three films were

shown in a triple-bill program advertised as *Seien nosatsu shukan*, which can awkwardly be translated as “Bewitching bombshell sex [film] week.”¹⁹

Market of Flesh was not exposed immediately after its release as stated in most sources,²⁰ but more than two weeks after its opening day.²¹ It was brazen captions like the one cited above and the provocative coverage of the film in the media that caught the attention of the authorities in the first place. A few days before the police took action the weekly magazine *Shukan taishu* (1962) published an article about the film and director Kobayashi Satoru’s troubled relationship with Eirin. The headline reads “The guy who picks a fight with Eirin” (“Eirin ni kenka o uru otoko”) and the article outlines in great detail the more provocative scenes of the film. The article is peppered with still photographs, among them one from the film’s opening sequence where the female protagonist’s sister is molested in a toilet with toilet paper stuffed into her mouth.²² Other weekly magazines published before the film’s exposure ran photo specials (*gurabia*) with stills from the film.²³ Special attention in the pre-release media coverage of the film was given to lead actress Katori Tamaki who in the past had won the Miss Universe contest in her home prefecture Kumamoto and became runner-up in the national contest. In 1958 she had entered the Nikkatsu studio, but was given only minor roles, so that in 1961 she left Nikkatsu.²⁴ In the media she was often compared with former Miss Argentina Isabelle Sarli, the nude star of the Argentine film *Thunder in the Leaves* (*El trueno entre las hojas*, 1956; director Armando Bo), which was distributed in Japan by Okura Eiga and released at about the same time as *Market of Flesh*.²⁵

It was in particular the sensational media coverage in the wake of *Market of Flesh*’s release that provoked the police to take action, which in fact came rather late. In the process Eirin was ignored by the police in the same way it was ignored by the producers of the film. Without consulting Eirin the producers complied with the authorities’ demands and cut all objectionable scenes. By doing so they averted further investigations by the police and could re-release the film a few days later.²⁶ The film naturally cashed in on the publicity the exposure had created. This resulted in a box office return the producers never had dreamed of. When in May 1962 the film was released in Nagoya together with the second Pink production of Okura Eiga, *Imperfect Marriage* (*Fukanzen kekkon*, 1962), in a double bill program entitled “World Collection of Bewitching (Films)” (“*Sekai nosatsu shukan*”), an adver-

tisement in the local sports daily stated that more than 300,000 people have seen the film so far in Tokyo and Osaka.²⁷ It is of course difficult to verify this figure and there is good reason to believe that the advertisement exaggerated the actual data. However, the fact that more than four months later *Market of Flesh* was still playing in Nagoya can be taken as an indicator that the film fared quite well. On September 29 the *Chunichi supotsu* ran another big advertisement—this time for the Toei Chika Gekijo—promoting the “controversial” (“*sanpi ryoron tairitsu!*”) film still as “problem(atic) film about sex” (“*sei no mondaisaku*”). The copy reads: “Don’t kick up a fuss because it is great” (“*sugoi sugoi to sawaganaide kudasai*”). What is interesting is that the film was now playing at a cinema, which unlike the Mirion-za, where the film was screened in May, specialized on foreign films.²⁸

The controversy around *Market of Flesh* had its amusing aspects, too. Two weeks after the film was exposed by the police, Okura Mitsugi offered the minister for agriculture, Kawano Ichiro, who had suggested converting unprofitable cinemas into supermarkets to improve the local supply of vegetables, meat and fish, to turn ten of his cinemas into real “*nikutai ichiba*” (meat markets).²⁹

The Pacific War and Himeyuri Corps, which opened on April 7, 1962, did not become the box-office hit Okura had hoped for. Indeed, the box office returns were meager and the balance looked even worse when compared with the huge gross profits of the low-budget production *Market of Flesh*. The financial failure of *The Pacific War and Himeyuri Corps* and the unexpected success of *Market of Flesh* were certainly crucial for Okura’s decision to concentrate on the low-end sexploitation market rather than high profile products.

Market of Flesh was directed by Kobayashi Satoru, who after graduating from Waseda University had entered Omi Production, the production company of Omi Toshiro, the youngest brother of Okura Mitsugi. In the 1940s and 1950s Omi had had a quite successful career as singer of popular songs before he turned to directing films with the help of his brother.³⁰ In 1959 Kobayashi made his directorial debut with *Crazy Desire* (*Kurutta yokubo*; co-directed by Matsui Minoru³¹) for the Shintoho contractor Kyowa Production. The same year he joined Shintoho. Already *Crazy Desire* included a number of titillating scenes³² which became a common feature in Kobayashi’s subsequent films such as *Teenage Turning Point* (*Judai no magari-kado*, 1959), *Dangerous Seduction* (*Kiken na yuwaku*, 1960) and *Naked Valley* (*Hadaka no tanima*,³³ 1960).

Kobayashi landed his greatest success with the sex education semi-documentary *Sex and Human Being* (*Sei to ningen*, 1960; co-directed by Kimoto Kenta), Shinto-ho’s top-grossing film of 1960. In fact it became runner-up of Shinto-ho’s all-time box-office hits headed by *Emperor Meiji and the Russo-Japanese War*. *Sex and Human Being* was produced by the newly established independent production company Junketsu Eiga Kenkyukai (Chastity Film Study Association), one of Okura’s many offspring contractors. The production company with the imaginative name also produced Okura Eiga’s second “Pink Film” *Imperfect Marriage* (*Fukanzen kekkon*, 1962) again directed by Kobayashi Satoru. The film tells the story of a married couple, which cannot bear children because the husband is impotent. They decide in favor of an in-vitro fertilization, but the marriage continues to be strained even after a child is born because it remains unclear whether the child is really a test-tube baby or the fruit of an extramarital affair of the wife. Eirin’s assessment of the film reads as follows: “This film gives scientific instruction to adults by a form of drama depicting a couple under unhappy circumstances. It is unsuitable for young audiences” (*ACMPCE*, 47). The film was marketed as “sex education film” and Okura evidently hoped for a re-run of the success of *Sex and Human Being* and its sequel *Sex and Human Being 2* (*Zoku Sei to ningen*, 1961).

3. The Pink Labeling

That today *Market of Flesh* is generally referred to as the “first Pink Film” is more a matter of convenience, than of significance.³⁴ The ascription occurred *a posteriori*; the term *pinku eiga* did not yet exist when *Market of Flesh* was released. It was coined the following year, but did not become a generally used signifier until a couple of years later. The term “eroduction” (*erodakushon*), another common denominator for the Pink Films, was also not yet in use when *Market of Flesh* hit the cinema. Elsewhere I have argued in favor of an understanding of Japanese film history as a “history without beginning.”³⁵ The same can be said about the Pink Film genre. To claim that the genre started with *Market of Flesh* is to ignore that several similar films have been made prior to *Market of Flesh*, which could also easily fit the “Pink Film” label.³⁶

The term “Pink Film” (*pinku eiga*) is said to have been introduced by Murai Minoru, a staff writer of the *Naigai taimusu* newspaper, in a location re-

port about the shooting of the Kokuei production *Cave of Lust* (*Joyoku no dokutsu*, 1963) by Seki Koji, published on September 9, 1963.³⁷ Kanai Yasuo, a staff writer of the newspaper *Daily Sports*, who attended the location shooting of *Cave of Lust* along with Murai Minoru, labeled the film “*momoiro eiga*” (“pink” film)³⁸ and described its production company Kokuei as “*momoiro no kishu*” (“pink banner-bearer” or “banner-bearer of the pink”).³⁹ The term “eroduction” (*erodakushon*), which in the first years was also frequently used for this new kind of (s)exploitation films, was also coined on this occasion by Fujiwara Isamu, the editor of *Naigai taimusu* who later became a well-known theater critic.

It is noteworthy, however, that the films produced and distributed by Okura Eiga—or erotic films in general—had been associated with the color pink long before Murai “introduced” the term *pinku eiga*. A year before Murai’s article appeared in *Naigai taimusu*, the weekly magazine *Asahi geino* for instance ran an article about Okura Mitsugi and his “Pink Films”. Headlining “Monopolising the Pink Market! The Secret of Crowd-Pulling Okura Eiga Production” (*Pinku shijo dokusen! Oatari Okura eiga no himitsu*) the article examines the reasons behind the successful “series of horror and Pink Films” (*kaiki to pinku no ichiren no eiga*).⁴⁰

At any rate, in his book *Naked Dream Chronicle—My [Personal] Pink Film History* (*Hadaka no yume nendaiki: Boku no pinku eigashi*) published in 1989, Murai states that he came up with the term “Pink Film” (*pinku eiga*) in distinction to “Blue Film” (*buru firumu*), a term which refers to illegal and potentially hardcore stag films.⁴¹ However, this too could easily be a retrospective interpretation, since the term “*buru firumu*” had only just been introduced to Japan in the early 1960s and was not yet commonly used. Back then stag films were more commonly known as “*wai-eiga*”, “*Y-eiga*”, “*sei-eiga*”, or in insider-circles as “*obi*”.⁴²

The color “pink” respectively its Japanese equivalent *momoiro* had sexual or erotic overtones in Japan for quite a while. Up until the 1950s the Japanese word “*momoiro*” (literally “peach color”) was commonly used to suggest erotic matters.⁴³ The popular phrase “*momoiro yugi*” (“pink play”) for instance denoted (morally objectionable) encounters of (primarily, but not exclusively) teenagers (including kissing and petting as well as sexual intercourse).⁴⁴ From the 1960s on the English loanword “*pinku*” (pink) started to gain ground as well, often with an even more explicit sexual innuendo as for instance with

“*pinku kyabare*” (pink cabaret) or “*pinku saron*” (pink salon).⁴⁵ Both referred to new kinds of sex establishments, which sprang up around 1960 and which offered sexual services (specifically hand and blow jobs, but no intercourse). The passage of the Anti-Prostitution Law (*baishun boshi-ho*) in May 1956 and the abolition of the red-light districts (*akasen chitai*) in 1958 entailed a fundamental restructuring of the Japanese sex-business and gave rise to new forms of establishments such as “pink cabarets”, “pink salons” or so-called “turkish baths” (*toruko furo*).⁴⁶ That those establishments often made recourse to the color “pink” could have had to do with the wish to evoke associations with the “red” of the old red-light districts by simultaneously stressing a certain newness.

The English loanword “*pinku*”, which started to gain leverage from around 1960 on,⁴⁷ was at first still often used in combination with the two Chinese characters for *momoiro*. The titles of the 1961 Toho film *Pink Super Express* (*Pinku no chotokkyū*) by Watanabe Yusuke or, closer to our topic, the two burlesque film compilations *Pink Midnight* (*Pinku no shin'ya*) and *Pink Show* (*Pinku sho*) from 1962, were written with the Chinese characters for *momoiro*, but spelled *pinku*. *Pink Midnight* was produced by Kyoritsu Eiga, the production company that also produced *Market of Flesh*,⁴⁸ while *Pink Show* was a compilation of burlesque films imported by Okura Eiga from the United States.

The prevalence of the word “pink” in a sexual context from around 1960 on to a certain degree also reflects the increasing eroticization of mainstream society and the pervasion of sexuality into the public sphere.⁴⁹ A paragon for this tendency was the popular late-night TV-program *Pink Mood Show* (*Pinku mudo sho*). Broadcasted by Fuji-TV between September 1960 and November 1961 the 15-minute entertainment program sponsored by a car radio maker featured every Sunday night erotic dances performed by strip dancers of the Nichigeki Music Hall.⁵⁰ Initially viewers could occasionally catch glimpses of bare breasts, but after complaints the show was mitigated and bare breasts were banished. The program was an instant success and sparked similar erotic TV-shows⁵¹ such as the *Eight Peaches Show*⁵² (Fuji-TV) or the *Seven Show* produced by NET (today TV Asahi) which also featured foreign strip dancers. In any case the phrase “pink mood” (*pinku mudo*) became a winged word and was very popular for several years.⁵³ It is entirely possible that Murai Minoru was inspired by it when he came up with the label “Pink Film.”

Anyhow, after Murai “introduced” the term *pinkeu eiga* in 1963 it quickly gained currency.

Initially, other terms such as *oiroke eiga* (“sexy films”), *eroeiga* (“ero(tic) films”) or the also newly coined “*erodakushon eiga*” (“eroduction”) were frequently used for this new kind of films as well, but with the development of a specialized production system and a separate distribution and exhibition infrastructure, “Pink Film” eventually became the generally accepted generic name for the rapidly growing number of independently produced sexploitation films which increasingly cut the ground from under the big studio’s feet.

4. *The Crisis of the Studio System and the Rise of Pink Films*

It is difficult to explain the astonishing rise of so-called Pink Films from a handful in 1963 to more than 200 in 1965 by changing popular tastes, an excessive interest in sexploitation or a generally more permissive social sentiment towards sexual matters. The soaring number of independently produced sexploitation films was rather a reaction to the waning power of the major studios and particularly the crisis in the exhibition market caused by plunging audiences and the studio’s subsequent cutback in production.

The 1950s are often thought of as Golden Years of Japanese cinema, and they clearly were Golden Years for the big studios who consolidated their power and controlled the film business not only on the level of production, but through a block-booking system and as they operated their own cinema chains on the level of distribution and exhibition.

The Japanese exhibition market was regulated by a multi-hierarchical system. Several divisions were at work. The first distinction was whether a cinema was specialized in Japanese films (*hogakan*) or foreign films (*yogakan*) or whether they showed mixed programs. In the urban centers the differentiation was quite distinctive, in smaller cities and rural areas mixed programs were more common. The second determinant was the cinema’s relation to the Japanese film studios. There were three types of cinemas: *chokueikan* were cinemas owned and directly run by the studios, *keiyakukan* were cinemas contracted to the studios, and independent cinemas were not contractually tied to the studios (mostly cinemas specialized in foreign films). The majority of cinemas belonged to the second type of contract cinemas. The contract cin-

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emas could again be divided into three categories: *senmonkan* (including *chokueikan*), *keitokan* and ordinary *keiyakukan*. *Senmonkan* and *keitokan* were exclusively contracted to a specific studio.⁵⁴ Whereas *senmonkan* showed exclusively films from its contractor studio, *keitokan* were obliged to show all films from the studio’s block-booking schedule, but were allowed to additionally show other films as well. The third distinction was the rank of a cinema in the release schedule. Depending on their location, facilities, etc. cinemas were divided into premiere theaters (*fugirikan*, usually the *chokueikan*), second-run cinemas (*nibankan*), third-run cinemas (*sanbankan*), etc. A new film was usually first released in central locations in the urban centers, like for instance in Asakusa or Shinjuku in Tokyo or Umeda in Osaka as well as in premiere cinemas in major cities like Nagoya or Sapporo. After the initial cinema-run the film copies would then be passed on to the *nibankan* in less central locations in Tokyo and Osaka or *fugirikan* in cities in the provinces such as Niigata, Shizuoka or Kumamoto. The more peripheral a cinema was located, the longer it had to wait until its turn in the studio’s release schedule.

The following chart gives an overview of the hierarchical structure of cinemas in 1962 at the advent of the Pink Film boom:

June 1962	<i>Senmonkan</i>	<i>Keitokan</i>	Other <i>keiyakukan</i>	<i>Fugiri</i>	2-5-ban	6-10-ban	11-ban & lower	Total
Shochiku	139	1218	451	88	182	237	1331	1838
Toho	245	1257	422	111	325	345	1143	1924
Daiei	174	1289	315	93	221	272	1192	1778
Toei	1125	1013	180	160	337	337	1484	2318
Nikkatsu	623	896	604	143	321	365	1294	2123

Source: *Eiga nenkan 1963-nenban*

As can be seen from this chart all studios had an extensive network of contract cinemas, which they tried to tie exclusively to them. This network sustained the block-booking system of the studios and the cinemas were guaranteed a new double-bill program every week. The cinemas themselves

had little choice in programming, but more or less had to show what the studios supplied. It was not uncommon that cinemas at the bottom end of the line (*11-ban* and lower in the chart above) casually changed their contractor or had contracts with more than one studio, but during the 1950s the system was altogether quite stable and powerful studios dominated over rather weak exhibitors. Up until the 1960s this system worked quite well,⁵⁵ but when the studios began to cut back their production as a reaction to dwindling revenues due to decreasing audience numbers, the system started to erode.

In order to cut costs, the studios reduced the number of productions, while at the same time increasing the budgets for certain high-profile productions which were marketed as “*daisaku*” (big productions).⁵⁶ The increase in production budgets was meant as a means to compensate for longer runs in the cinema, because with altogether fewer films the schedules did not change every week any more, but every 10 days or two weeks. Between 1960 and 1964 Toei cut back its production from 160 to 62, Nikkatsu from 101 to 61, Daiei from 83 to 52, Shochiku from 76 to 52 and Toho from 75 to 44.⁵⁷ The shift from weekly changing programs to longer runs had a drastic effect on the cinemas, whose revenues gradually went down. Cinemas in the urban centers were less affected, because of a higher fluctuation of visitors and the advantage of being on top of the exhibition pyramid profiting from the marketing of new products. Cinemas at the periphery on the other hand, were hit hardest, because they mostly depended on local audiences and suffered from declining revenues the longer the run of a program lasted. The operation of cinemas thus became less and less viable, especially in peripheral locations, and in the end many cinemas closed down. During the 1960s the number of cinemas steadily declined from its peak of 7,473 in 1960 to 3,246 at the end of the decade. The extinction of cinemas was not evenly distributed. Between 1961 and 1963, for instance, the number of cinemas in Tokyo declined 9.6%, whereas in neighboring Chiba Prefecture the number dropped 23.1%, in Saitama Prefecture 36.1% and in rural Yamanashi Prefecture 48.7%.⁵⁸ The majority of cinemas that closed were cinemas at the bottom end of the exhibition system (*10-bankan* or below).⁵⁹

Whereas for cinemas at the upper end of the exhibition pyramid double-bill programs were the norm (top cinemas increasingly switched even to single-bills), cinemas at the lower end ordinarily showed triple-bill or even

quadruple-bill programs. With the decreasing number of studio productions they increasingly had difficulties to fill their programs.

It is here that the Pink Films enter the picture. They were cheap and attractive alternatives to the expensive studio films and for many cinema owners they became life-savers, which kept them afloat. The contracts with the studios usually stipulated that the cinemas paid half their revenues to the studios.⁶⁰ With Pink Films the commission was less than 30%. With the soaring numbers of Pink Films and price dumping caused by over-production and throat-cut competition in the second half of the 1960s the commission rate dropped as low as 10%.⁶¹ Exhibitors thus could cash in almost all of the profits. At first Pink Films were mostly booked to spice up the ordinary double bill programs in their second week when attendance figures went down or to substitute for studio films in triple bill programs. When these films turned out to be more lucrative than the studio films, however, the demand rose and cinemas began to specialize in these "adult films". The number of Pink Films jumped to 67 in 1964 and soared to 225 in 1965. A ruinous competition and market adjustments, such as the formation of Pink Film distribution networks resulted in a decline of Pink Films to 186 in 1966 and 164 in 1967, thereafter the number soared again to 244 in 1968 and 237 in 1969. In that year the Pink Film production for the first time outnumbered the combined production of the five major studios.

The major studios lamented the uncontrolled growth of the Pink Film market, which according to all accounts cut the ground from under the studios feet. As a matter of fact, however, Pink Films were less harmful to the studios than often claimed. Indeed, the studios profited from Pink Films inasmuch as many of their contract cinemas could pay their commission to the studios only because of additional incomes made with Pink Films.⁶²

A survey conducted by the Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan (Nihon Eiga Seisakusha Renmei)⁶³ in 1969 revealed that 1,527 (41.1%) out of the 3,711 surveyed cinemas showed only movies from the five major studios, 277 (7.5%) were specialized in Pink Films, 426 (11.5%) showed mixed programs of studio films and Pink Films, 726 (19.6%) showed foreign films and 757 (20.4%) mixed programs of foreign and Japanese films (including Pink Films).⁶⁴

It is noteworthy that the production of Pink Films often emanated from the exhibition side. One of the first Pink Film production companies beside the Pink Film veterans Okura Eiga and Kokuei was Dainana Gurupu (Seventh Group). It was founded in April 1963 by five cinema owners from Northern Japan, who put together money to produce their own Pink Films. For their first film, *Hot Moans* (*Atsui umeki*, 1963) they hired the former Shintoho director Miwa Akira. Their next film *Devilishness of the Night* (*Yoru no masbo*, 1964) as well as subsequent films were directed by Yuasa Namio, one of the five founders who for several years had run a cinema in Mito and who had no formal training in filmmaking.⁶⁵ After several Pink films, Yuasa directed *Blood and Law* (*Chi to okite*) in 1965 based on the autobiography of former Ando-gumi *yakuza* boss Ando Noboru, who played himself in the film. The film marked Ando's film debut and was distributed by Shochiku, as were the follow-ups *The Law of Runaways* (*Yasagure no okite*, 1965) and *Pier without Pity* (*Tobo to okite*, 1965).⁶⁶ In 1966 Yuasa went to Taiwan where he directed more than a dozen films until the 1970s.⁶⁷

Another early example of a director-turned exhibitor is Kitazato Toshio, who did not come from a cinema background, but who since the early 1950s ran the strip venue Gekijo Aban(gyarudo) in Ikebukuro, Tokyo. Kitazato had plenty of experiences with stage productions, but was a newcomer to film when he directed *Moska* (*Yasei no Raara*, 1963), kind of female Tarzan film.⁶⁸ The film, set in late 19th century Siberia, was shot in Hokkaido with an all-Russian cast. The female lead, a Russian woman named Nina Volganskaya,⁶⁹ who plays a blond savage living in the wilderness of the Siberian steppe,⁷⁰ was a stripper working in Kitazato's strip club in Ikebukuro. The film critic of the newspaper *Mainichi shinbun*, Matsushima Toshihiko, recalls that when the film opened in Niigata in summer 1963 lead actress Nina appeared on stage in a live striptease performance.⁷¹

In April 1963 *Moska* was shown at the Shinjuku Chikyu-za together with *Blond All Nude Tournament* (*Kinpatsu oru nudo taikai*), a compilation of three strip films from 1960—*Keyhole Sexy* (*Kiihoru sekushii*), *Climax Seven* (*Kuraimakokusu seibun*) and *Black and White Desire* (*Kuro to shiro no yokujo*). These three films were the first erotic productions of Kokuei, which eventually became one of the most important production companies of Pink Films.⁷² The Shinjuku Chikyu-za was operated by the exhibitor Keitsu Kigyo, who was founded in 1948 and ran cinemas in Shinjuku, Ikebukuro, Shibuya and Jiyu-

gaoka.⁷³ In 1965 Keitsu Kigyo joined Okura Eiga when Okura Mitsugi launched the so-called OP-chain,⁷⁴ the first Pink cinema-chain. In August 1968 Keitsu Kigyo eventually started its own Pink Film production Million Film, which soon became one of the big players in the market.⁷⁵

There are plenty of other examples of exhibitors who entered the flourishing Pink Film market in the 1960s. The big studios also recognized the lucrateness of Pink Films. Shochiku made handsome profits when it distributed Takechi Tetsuji's Pink productions *Daydream (Hakujitsumu)* and *Dream of the Red Chamber (Kokeimu)*, in 1964.⁷⁶ Takechi's next film, *Black Snow (Kuroi yuki)*, 1965) was distributed by Nikkatsu, which in 1968 began distributing Pink Films on a regular basis.⁷⁷ In 1971 Nikkatsu eventually escaped bankruptcy by switching its production to sexploitation films with the launch of its Roman Porno line. Toei had started producing sexploitation films even before, and in the early 1970s even the family oriented Shochiku studio started its own Pink Film production unit Tokatsu. Only Toho refrained from entering the sexploitation market.

The highly-publicized court-case of Takechi's *Black Snow* which was the first Pink Film prosecuted on charges of obscenity, and the also widely publicized “scandal” Wakamatsu Koji's *Secret Acts Behind Walls (Kabe no naka no himogoto)*, 1965) caused at the Berlin Film Festival in 1965⁷⁸ cast light on the Pink Film genre that until then had lead a shadowy existence. The attention these two incidents directed towards Pink Films came at a time when the Pink Film production went rampant. By that time Pink Films had become an integral part of the Japanese film production and the studios had lost hope that the Pink Film phenomenon was only a temporary fad that would eventually go away.

NOTES

¹ In addition to the 548 feature films 8 documentary films and 15 TV-features re-edited for theatrical release were distributed in 1960 raising the total number of distributed films to 571 (Ninagawa, “Naigai eiga gyokai kessan 1960-nen,” 92).

² Ninagawa, “Naigai eiga gyokai kessan 1960-nen,” 94.

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- ³ In many sources Okura's first name is given as Mitsugu, but the correct spelling is Mitsugi (cf. *Nihon no eigajin*, 102).
- ⁴ The first Japanese scope-format release was actually the Toei production *The Lord Takes a Bride* (*Hōjō no hanayome*, 1958) directed by Matsuda Sadatsugu. It opened on April 2, four weeks before *Emperor Meiji and the Great Russo-Japanese War* (*Meiji Tenno to Nichi-Ro daisen-so*, 1958), which was released on April 29, the birthday of the Showa Emperor. However, since the production of the latter started months before the Toei film it is generally regarded as the first Japanese cinemascope film.
- ⁵ Sharp (*Behind the Pink Curtain*, 31-42) gives a good account of the *ama eiga* genre. For an overview in English about Shinto-ho's history, especially the Okura years, see the catalogue of the Shinto-ho retrospective of the 2010 Far East Filmfestival Udine (Schilling, *Nudes! Guns! Ghosts!*).
- ⁶ The problem was not only that the main purpose of selling the studio land was to compensate for Okura's personal debt rather than help the studio and its employees, but also that Okura commissioned the realtor Kinryū Fudosan with the transaction. The director of Kinryū Fudosan was in fact Okura's son, Kaneda Mitsuo (cf. *Eiga nenkan 1962-nenban*, 148). Other children and relatives of Okura also held important posts: his youngest brother Toshihiko was vice-president of Shinto-ho, his eldest son Mitsukuni was executive director of Shinto-ho, his second son Mitsuhiko (who later became Okura's successor as president of Okura Eiga) was director of Fuji Eiga, and Kato Masashi, an adopted son, was head of Shinto-ho's accounting department and executive of Fuji Eiga.
- ⁷ The film title is often also given as *Nikutai no ichiba*. Okura Eiga's film list as well as the three official posters of the film give *Nikutai ichiba* as title, the screenplay of the film in the possession of assistant director Ogawa Kin'ya is titled *Nikutai no ichiba*. Higashiya ("Dokuritsu-kei seijin eiga saiko 3," 67) therefore concludes that the correct film title is *Nikutai ichiba*, whereas the screenplay title is *Nikutai no ichiba*. Both versions of the film's title can be found in contemporary media reports and other sources such as the Film Yearbook or documents of Eirin. Later on *Nikutai no ichiba* became the commonly used title. In some English sources the film is also referred to as "Flesh Market". I go with the translation "Market of Flesh" which was also used by Eirin. It has to be pointed out, however, that even Eirin did not use the title consistently (cf. *ACMPCE*, 2, 47).
- ⁸ In the 1950s there have been several incidences of Eirin approved films seized by the police, but in these cases the incriminating scenes have been retroactively inserted and were not reviewed by Eirin (cf. Domenig, "A History of Sex Education Films in Japan").

- ⁹ Before the war Ikeda Kazuo worked for Kokusai Eiga Tsushinsha and the Toyko office of Columbia Pictures before becoming director of the advertising department of Tokyo Hassei Eiga. Later he switched to Shochiku where he became director of the planning department of Shochiku's Ofuna Studio. After the war Ikeda worked as producer for Daiei and Shintoho, for which he produced amongst others *Sex and Human Being 2* (*Zoku Sei to ningen*, 1961) directed by Kobayashi Satoru. In 1954 he established his own film production Ikeda Production. The second film produced by Ikeda Production was *Burning Young Blood* (*Wakaki chi wa moete*, 1954), the directorial debut of Kimoto Kenta, who wrote the screenplay for the above mentioned *Sex and Human Being 2* as well as for Okura Eiga's second Pink production *Imperfect Marriage* (*Fukanzen kekkon*, 1962).
- ¹⁰ *The Film Yearbook* states that seven scenes were cut by the producers (*Eiga nenkan 1963-nenban*, 359), contemporary press reports indicate that six scenes were deleted from the film (cf. “Sono bamen dake shuen shita joyu”; “Sekkusui ni kubi o shimerareru Eirin,” *Shukan gendai* 4, no. 14 (April 8, 1962): 50; Shimaji, “Nihon eiga o midasu mono wa dare ka,” 58).
- ¹¹ Another even more controversial issue was (and is to this date) the censorship of imported films by Japanese Customs, which constitutional law experts such as Miyazawa Toshiyoshi, Ito Masami or Okudaira Yasuhiro considered as clearly unconstitutional (cf. Ito “Zeikan Ken'etsu to Kenpo 21-jo”; Okudaira “Zeikan ken'etsu no ikensei”).
- ¹² For a very detailed description of the film story see Kondo, “Okura Eiga ‘Nikutai ichiba’ o mite.”
- ¹³ In an article in the weekly magazine *Shukan shincho* (“Sono bamen dake shuen shita joyu”) the scenes are described in great detail.
- ¹⁴ An integral print of the film is not existent. Only a worn 20 minutes fragment of the film has survived and is locked away in the archive of the National Film Center. The media reports at the time, however, include quite detailed descriptions (especially of the scenes that had been cut) and are often garnished with stills that give an idea of how the scenes have looked.
- ¹⁵ Shimaji, “Nihon eiga o midasu mono wa dare ka,” 59.
- ¹⁶ Three prints, which had been sent to Osaka, Hokkaido, and the Chubu region respectively, had to be flown back to Tokyo after the film was exposed and the police ordered cuts (cf. *Eiga nenkan 1963-nenban*, 359).

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- ¹⁷ The film was most likely a compilation of footage imported from the United States. Morimatsu (“Nihon eiga no itanji koko ni ari”) gives a description of the film and the whole program.
- ¹⁸ Unauthorized in this respect means not approved by Eirin. Such releases under a different, often more lascivious title were quite common. Mizoguchi Kenji’s *The Life of Oharu* (*Saikaku ichidai onna*, 1952) for instance was shown in a heavily cut version under the title *Irogoyomi ichidai*, which can loosely be translated as *Sex Calendar of a Generation*. Kurosawa Akira’s *The Quiet Duel* (*Shizuka naru ketto*, 1949) was unofficially “re-released” as *The Devil Aiming at Chastity* (*Junketsu o nerau akuma*) (cf. Kimata “Kurosawa Akira no ero eiga daiippen”). The title change of Rozier’s film was most likely the idea of Okura Mitsugi who had financed *Market of Flesh* and who had taken over the distribution company Daiwa Film a few months earlier (see below). The title *Tsubo to onna* (lit. *The Pot and the Woman*) has an obscene overtone, because the word *tsubo* also alludes to a woman’s genitalia (like in *tsuboarai*, a service offered at soaplands where the prostitute “washes” the client’s fingers or toes in her vagina).
- ¹⁹ The Japanese title operates with a word play on *seien* (“bewitchingly beautiful”) giving it a more sexual connotation by using a different character (性艶 instead of 凄艶). Okura Eiga had launched a similar program a few weeks earlier under the title *Sekai noen zenshu* (*Voluptuous Films From Around the World*), using likewise a wordplay on *noen* (悩艶 instead of 濃艶). The program included the following titles: *Dangerous Play with Fire* (*Kiken na biasobi*), *The Mummy and the Beauty* (*Miira to bijo*), *Naked Woman on Broadway* (*Buroduei no raju*) and *Well of Women* (*Onna no ido*). The first film was a re-release of an older Shinto film, the last an unauthorized version of Charles Brabant’s *Les Possédées* (1956) (in the US released as *Passionate Summer*). In Nagasaki the program’s title and poster called the authorities into action, who saw a violation of the prefecture’s Juvenile Protection Ordinance (*seishonen hogo jorei*) and banned the poster (Shimaji “Nihon eiga o midasu mono wa dare ka,” 58).
- ²⁰ Most sources state that the film was exposed two days after its release (cf. Oda and Kawashima, “Katori Tamaki,” 196; Murai *Hadaka no yume nendaiki*, 36; Isurugi, “*Nikutai ichiba*,” *Pink & Porno*, 160; Sharp, *Behind the Pink Curtain*, 46; Suzuki, *Showa pinku eigakan*, 30).
- ²¹ That is to say that the exposure came quite late. At the time the programs usually changed every week. That *Market of Flesh* was still playing two weeks after its release in the same theatre can be taken as an indicator that the film fared very well. This is confirmed by contemporary media reports (cf. Morimatsu “Nihon eiga no itanji koko ni ari”).

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- ²² Morimatsu, “Nihon eiga no itanji koko ni ari.”
- ²³ For instance, “Biito-zoku no kiken na yugi,” *Shukan tokushu jitsuna* no. 39 (March 8, 1962): 3-5, “Kyoran suru shin'yazoku no seitai—Kyoritsu Eiga ‘Nikutai no ichiba,’” *Shukan jiken jitsuna* 3, no. 6 (March 13, 1962): 3-6, “Konshu no sukuriin: Yaju no tawamura—Kyoritsu Eiga ‘Nikutai no ichiba’ yori,” *Shukan tokubo* no. 29 (March 3, 1962): 3-6, and “Eirin taibo? ‘Nikutai no ichiba’ to iu eiga,” *Shukan doyo manga* 6, no. 8 (March 16, 1962): 3-6, published photo galleries of stills from the film. The photos are credited to the magazine’s photo departments, because the stills had not been submitted to Eirin for approval (which Eirin probably would not have given). The photos are mostly from scenes which were cut by police order. An article about the film written by Kobayashi himself for the newspaper *Tokyo chunichi shinbun* published on March 14, 1962, the day before the police took action, is conspicuously tame compared to the sensational reports in the mentioned weekly magazines.
- ²⁴ At Nikkatsu she appeared under the stage name Sakuma Shinobu as well as under her birth name Kuki Tokiko. She used the name Katori Tamaki for the first time in *Market of Flesh*. Many sources list both names, Katori Tamaki and Kuki Tokiko, in the credits of the film. They all seem to draw on the credits given in the film magazine *Kinema junpo* (No. 332, January 2, 1963). For more on Katori see the interview with her in Suzuki, *Showa pinku eigakan*.
- ²⁵ The film was first released in Kyushu and Kansai on February 3 under the Japanese title *Nyotai ari jigoku*. In Tokyo the film opened a week after *Market of Flesh* on March 8, 1962.
- ²⁶ According to the film’s chief assistant director Ogawa Kin’ya the producers eliminated the scenes objected by the police and reassembled a new version from the rushes and left-over footage (Sharp, *Beyond the Pink Curtain*, 46-47).
- ²⁷ Untitled film ad, *Chunichi supotsu* (September 27, 1962): 8.
- ²⁸ The film was shown together with the American horror thriller *Honeymoon of Terror* (1961; director Peter Perry) and the English striptease film *Le bal du Moulin Rouge* (1960) in a program entitled “*Yoru yoru o sekushii mudo-shu*” (Nocturnal sexy mood collection) (*Chunichi supotsu* [September 29, 1962]: 8).
- ²⁹ “‘Nikutai no ichiga’ kara ‘Niku-ichiba’ e—Kawano Koso o uketa Okura shacho,” *Shukan shincho* no. 322 (April 23, 1962): 13.
- ³⁰ Omi, whose real name was Okura Toshihiko, was also vice-president of Shintohto and later Okura Eiga.

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- ³¹ Matsui had worked as director for Shochiku before the war, but was not able to continue his career as director after the war. *Crazy Desire* is the only directorial work to his credit after the war. His actual contribution to this film is debatable.
- ³² Kobayashi's assertion that he was forced by Eirin to cut two thirds of the film (Morimatsu, "Nihon eiga no itanji koko ni ari," 19) must be regarded as strongly exaggerated.
- ³³ The title is ambiguous, because *tanima* also means cleavage.
- ³⁴ Goto Kazutoshi ("Pinku eiga hachi-nen-shi," 34) for instance regards *Free Trade in Flesh* (*Nikutai jiyu boeki*) as "first" Pink Film (cf. also Goto, "Pinku eiga fuzoku-shi," 137). The film was directed by Motogi Sojiro, a former producer of Toho, who produced most of Kurosawa Akira's films. After leaving Toho Motogi turned to directing and made more than 100 Pink Films, mostly under pseudonyms such as Takagi Takeo, Shinagawa Shoji, Kishimoto Keiichi and Fujimoto Junzo. Motogi got the idea of directing low-budget sex films from Oi Yuji, a producer at Iwanami Eiga. After quitting Iwanami Eiga Oi himself became a Pink Film producer and worked amongst others for Kokuei (cf. Suzuki, *Pinku eiga suikoden*, 75-79). About Motogi see also Fujikawa, *Niji no hashi*.
- ³⁵ Cf. Domenig, "Eiga no tanjo saiko."
- ³⁶ One can go back as far as 1953 to the film *Naked Woman of Passion* (*Jonetsu no rajo*), another female Tarzan version, which shares several features with Seki Koji's *Cave of Lust* (*Joyoku no dokutsu*), the first film labeled as "Pink Film". The film was produced by the independent production company Nanpo Eigasha, which in 1953 merged with Rajio Eiga, another independent production company founded in 1947 by the former studio director of Shinko Kinema's Tokyo studio, Imamura Sadao, and Seki Koji, which in the 1950s had produced several sex education films (cf. Domenig, "A History of Sex Education Films in Japan, Part 2."). *Naked Woman of Passion* was also distributed under the title *The Naked Woman of the Jungle* (*Janguru no rajo*). *Janguru no rajo* was also the Japanese distribution title of yet another female Tarzan film, the German production *Liane, das Mädchen aus dem Urwald* by Eduard von Borsody (1956), which in Japan was released in April 1960 by Towa Shoji.
- ³⁷ In the article Murai used the term "*opinku eiga*" with an honorific prefix "o-". The prefix was later dropped, although initially it was not uncommon to use the terms "*opinku*" or "*opinku eiga*". The added prefix in this case gave the phrase often an ironic touch. A revised version of Murai's location report was published later that year in a special edition of the film magazine *Kinema junpo* (Murai, "Oiroke eiga roke zuikoki?").

³⁸ The phrase was already used prior to that in advertisements for Kobayashi Satoru’s *The Law of Sinful Sexual Relations [of a Buddhist Monk]* (*Nyoban no okite*, 1963) which featured the catch phrase “*momoiro eiga to yobeba yobe!*” (Call it a Pink Film!) (cf. untitled film ad, *Chunichi supotsu*, [August 9, 1963]: 8). In the 1950s the phrase “*momoiro eiga*” referred to stag films as well. In July 1959, for instance, the *Naigai taimusu* reported on a police crack-down on stag films in an article headlined “Momorio 8-miri eiga kaisha,” *Naigai taimusu* (July 2, 1959): 2. Four months prior to Murai’s report, *Naigai taimusu* had published an article headlined “Pink eiga tekihatsu,” in which “*pinku eiga*” referred to illegal stag films (*Naigai taimusu* [May 21, 1963]: 7). The article also features an interview with director Kobayashi Satoru. The article’s title (*pinku shijo = pinku ichiba*) contains associations with the title of Kobayashi’s film *Market of Flesh* (“Pinku shijo dokusen! Oatari Okura Eiga no himitsu,” *Shukan asahi geino* [September 9, 1962]: 12-18). The phrase “*Pinku shijo dokusen*” was also used by Okura Eiga in advertisements, e.g. for the double bill *Ama no kaishinju* (director Kobayashi Satoru, 1963; rendered in English as *Naked Girls After Demon Pearls*) and *The Flesh Merchant* (director W. Merle Connell, 1956; Japanese title *Confessions of Prostitute Sisters* [*Baishun shimai no kokubaku*]) in November 1962 at the Teatoru Kibo in Nagoya (cf. untitled film ad, *Chunichi supotsu* [November 16, 1962]: 7).

³⁹ *Daily sports* (September 9, 1963): 7. Veteran Pink Film director Mukai Kan also stated that the term “*pinku eiga*” was used by cinema operators long before Murai presumably “invented” the label (cf. Suzuki, *Showa pinku eigakan*, 78).

⁴⁰ The article also features an interview with director Kobayashi Satoru. The article’s title (*pinku shijo = pinku ichiba*) contains associations with the title of Kobayashi’s film *Market of Flesh* (“Pinku shijo dokusen! Oatari Okura Eiga no himitsu,” *Shukan asahi geino* [September 9, 1962]: 12-18). The phrase “*Pinku shijo dokusen*” was also used by Okura Eiga in advertisements, e.g. for the double bill *Ama no kaishinju* (director Kobayashi Satoru, 1963; rendered in English as *Naked Girls After Demon Pearls*) and *The Flesh Merchant* (director W. Merle Connell, 1956; Japanese title *Confessions of Prostitute Sisters* [*Baishun shimai no kokubaku*]) in November 1962 at the Teatoru Kibo in Nagoya (cf. *Chunichi supotsu* [November 16, 1962]: 7).

⁴¹ Murai, *Hadaka no yume nendaiki*, 20.

⁴² For the history of “blue films” in Japan see Miki, *Buru firumu monogatari*.

⁴³ A couple of erotic films featured *momoiro* in their title as for instance *Pink Paradise* (*Momoiro paradaisu*), a film shown in April 1955 in a “sex film” program at the Ueno Star-za, which was exposed by the police (cf. Domenig, “A History of Sex Education Films in Japan”).

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- ⁴⁴ “*Momoiro yugi*” was also a standard phrase in the advertisements of the sex education films of the 1950s (cf. Domenig, “A History of Sex Education Films in Japan, Part 3.”).
- ⁴⁵ Often used in its abbreviation *pinsaro*.
- ⁴⁶ The passage of the Anti-Prostitution Law and the abolition of the red-light districts may have contributed to a tendency in Japanese cinema of increasingly addressing sexual topics from around 1956 on as for instance in the *taiyozoku* films.
- ⁴⁷ For instance all four weekly magazines mentioned above in note 23, which published stills of *Market of Flesh* in their photo gallery before the film was exposed by the police, had columns with the word “pink” in their titles: “O-pinku yokocho” (*Shukan tokushu jitsuna*), “Pink Corner” (*Shukan tokubo*), “Pinku sen’ichiya” (*Shukan jiken jitsuna*) and “Pinku no me” (*Shukan doyo manga*).
- ⁴⁸ *Pink Midnight* was approved by Eirin on January 23, 1962, a month earlier than *Market of Flesh* (ACMPCE, 46-47).
- ⁴⁹ Typical examples for this tendency are the launch of mainstream men-magazines such as *Heibon panchi* (*Heibon Punch*) and *Shukan pureiboi* (*Weekly Playboy*) or the miniskirt and bikini fashion.
- ⁵⁰ Some of the burlesque dancers which appeared regularly in the *Pink Mood* program later had distinguished careers as film actresses, most notably Harukawa Masumi, who started her career as strip dancer under the name Mary Rose (Merii Rozu) and is in the West perhaps best remembered in the lead role of Imamura Shohei’s *Intentions of Murder* (*Akai satsui*, 1964).
- ⁵¹ These programs were commonly referred to as “*oiroke bangumi*” (sexy programs). There were also popular *oiroke bangumi* on radio. It is safe to say that especially the private TV-stations used erotic programs as a strategy to increase their ratings and to enlarge their audience. For Fuji-TV, who had just begun operation in March 1959, as well as for other private TV stations erotic programs such as the *Pink Mood Show* were a means to secure a specific segment on the highly competitive TV market dominated by the more conservative NHK. At its peak the *Pink Mood Show* ratings rose to 18% (“Kiete naku naru ‘pinku mudo sho,’ *Shukan heibon* 47, no. 3 [November 22, 1961]: 54).
- ⁵² *The Eight Peaches Show* (*Eito pūchesu sho*) featured erotic dances performed by members of the SKD (Shochiku Kagekidan) dancing troupe known as the “Eight Peaches”. The name had a similar erotic connotation (peaches = jap. *momo* = *momoiro* = pink).

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- ⁵³ The popularity of the phrase can for instance be seen in book titles such as Hara Hiroshi’s *Anata to watashi no pinku mudo kogiroku* (“Lecture of Your and My Pink Mood”; 1961) or Takemura Ken’ichi’s *Otona no eigo—Pinku mudo ressun* (“English for Adults—Pink Mood Lessons”; 1962), as well as in record titles such as Matsuo Kazuko’s *Pink Mood Show* (1961), the compilation *Ozashiki pinku mudo* (“Pink Mood Party,” 1962), Suzuki Yoichi & His Latin Companion’s *Kokotsu no pinku mudo* (“Pink Mood Ecstasy,” 1965) or the *Pinku mudo derakusu* (“Pink Mood Deluxe”) series with the narrator Wakayama Genzo. Films with an erotic content such as the films of Ishii Teruo were also referred to as “pink mood films” (*pinku mudo eiga*) (cf. Goto, “Pinku eiga hachi-nen-shi,” 41).
- ⁵⁴ They were also known as *zenpurokan*. *Zenpuro* is the abbreviation of *zen-purodakushon* (all-productions) and means all films from a studio.
- ⁵⁵ The studios profited clearly more than the exhibitors, though, and the relationship between studios and local exhibitors was not without frictions (cf. Kitaura, “Kogyoshatachi no chosen”).
- ⁵⁶ The rise in budgets was in actual fact less pronounced than the studios wanted to make believe. Between 1961 and 1966 the average budget (direct costs or *chokusetsubi*, not including indirect costs or *kansetsubi* such as staff wages) per film rose from (in million yen): 232.6 to 295.8 at Shochiku, 309.1 to 370.6 at Toho, and 217.0 to 267.1 at Daiei. At Toei it fell from 329.5 to 321.7 and at Nikkatsu from 250.8 to 235.8 (*Eiga nenkan 1963-nenban*, 47; *Eiga nenkan 1967-nenban*, 207-212). Considering the relatively high inflation rate (on average annually 5,88%) this measures up to a de-facto decrease of budgets for all studios.
- ⁵⁷ Data based on *Eiga nenkan 1961-nenban* and *Eiga nenkan 1965-nenban*. The Toho figures include the films produced by its subcontractors Takarazuka Eiga and Tokyo Eiga. In addition to these in-house productions, the studios also distributed a few of externally produced films (e.g. documentary films).
- ⁵⁸ The nationwide decline amounted to 14.8% (*Eiga nenkan 1964-nenban*, 54).
- ⁵⁹ *Eiga nenkan 1964-nenban*, 263.
- ⁶⁰ Although it was not uncommon that cinemas at the bottom end of the exhibition circuit, which had the weakest links with the studios, were often granted special conditions, which in real terms meant a moderate reduction of the 50% rate.
- ⁶¹ Takahashi, “Gosha no shijo o doko made kutte iru ka,” 194.

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- ⁶² See, for instance, the interview with Yamoto Teruo, the president of Kokuei, in *Shukan shincho* (September 9, 1964): 130.
- ⁶³ Also known as Eiren. Eiren basically represented the major studios.
- ⁶⁴ One-hundred and nineteen Pink Film cinemas (213 with mixed programs including Pink Films) in the Kanto area, 85 (89) in the Kansai area, 27 (58) in the Chubu region, 31 (31) in Kyushu, 15 (33) in Hokkaido. One-hundred and nine cinemas showed single bills, 1,806 double bills, 1,783 triple bills and 13 quadruplet-bills (Takahashi, “Gosha no shijo o doko made kutte iru ka,” 194).
- ⁶⁵ For his debut film Yuasa used the pseudonym Iwata Namio.
- ⁶⁶ Yuasa was at the time one of the few directors who proceeded from Pink Films to major films. The other way round was more common. For instance Toei director Fukada Kinnosuke also in 1965 founded the Pink Film production company 8-Puro, and Shochiku director Kurahashi Yosuke together with Kimata Akitaka established Taka Productions with which he made several Pink Films (under the pen-name Fuma Saburo as well as under his real name). His colleague at Shochiku Fukuda Seiichi also switched to Pink Films when the Shochiku Kyoto studio was shut down in July 1965.
- ⁶⁷ The following blog lists the films Yuasa made in Taiwan: <http://senkichi.blogspot.com/2009/02/1.html>
- ⁶⁸ The film was produced by Naigai Firumu, a production and distribution company established in November 1958. It distributed “sex education” films such as *Beautiful Instinct* (*Utsukushiki bonno*) and *The Perfect Marriage* (*Kanzen naru kekkon*) as well as imported nude films. In 1959 Naigai Firumu started producing its own films beginning with *Brothel Boat—Have No Regrets* (*Ochorobune—Watashi wa kokai shinai*), a “precursor” of the later Pink Films. Pretending to support the government’s anti-prostitution legislation and gaining approval of feminist lawmakers such as Ichikawa Fusae and Kamichika Ichiko *Brothel Boat* caused considerable irritation, because the finished film contradicted their putative noble motives. According to assistant director Ibuki Kyonosuke the film was made with a budget of 1.4 million yen, grossed 60 million yen in box-office revenues and recapitalized the financially stricken Naigai Firumu (Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 60). Director Nanbu Taizo in 1964 founded the Pink production company Daihachi Geijutsu Eiga and directed more than a dozen Pink Films.
- ⁶⁹ The correct spelling of her last name is not absolutely clear, because in the Japanese sources the name is only given in *katakana* as Niina Vogansukaya (cf. *Keitsu cinema topics* 156 [April 10, 1963]: 3).

- ⁷⁰ The Eirin documents, which render the English title as *Mollika*, summarized the film in the following way: “This film handles the theme of exotic story based in the past days of a foreign country with foreign actors and actresses. The main character of this film is a strange naked woman living in a forest” (*ACMPCE*, 49).
- ⁷¹ Matsushima, *Nikkatsu roman poruno zenshi*, 110-111. There was a close link between strip venues and films. In the 1950s it was a common practice for strip venues to also have film screenings (see the essay in this volume by Kimata Kimihiko). There were also regular film screenings at Kitazato’s Gekijo Aban. With the rise of Pink Films in the 1960s so-called *jitsuen* programs emerged in which erotic live stage performances were given in between Pink Film programs.
- ⁷² For a history of Kokuei, the second big player in the Pink Film field beside Okura, see Domenig, “Proud to Be Pink.”
- ⁷³ In 1987 Keitsu Kigyo was renamed Humax Cinema.
- ⁷⁴ There are several interpretations of what OP means—“Okura Pictures”, “Okura Pink” or even “Originality Pictures” (e.g. Takahashi, “Gosha no shijo o doko made kutte iru ka,” 173). In any case, the OP-chain was launched by Okura Mitsugi in April 1965 and initially distributed films of Okura Eiga, Nihon Cinema (a spring-off from Kokuei), Kanto Movie, Kanto Eihai, Aoi Eiga, Hiroki Eiga and Meiko Select. The OP-chain comprised of 15 cinemas in the Kanto region, ten belonging to Okura, and five to Keitsu Kigyo (which in addition showed ever month three films by Kokuei, Tokyo Kyoei and Nichiei, who did not join the OP-chain). In 1968 the OP-chain was restructured and now showed the films of the following eight Pink Film distributors: Okura Eiga, Million Film, Nihon Cinema, Kanto Movie, Kanto Eihai, Aoi Eiga, World Eiga and Roppo Eiga.
- ⁷⁵ Million Film remained a big player until 1986 when production was stopped.

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- ⁷⁶ The year before Shochiku had already released Takechi's *Woman... Oh, Women* (*Nihon no yoru: Onna, onna, onna monogatari*, 1963), an independently produced sex (mondo) documentary which can also be considered to belong to the Pink Film genre, which at that point had not yet developed the genre conventions which characterized later productions. With a turnover of approximately 200 million yen *Daydream* was the second-highest grossing film of Shochiku in 1964. The highest grossing film was Kinoshita Keisuke's *The Scent of Incense* (*Koge*, 1964) with 240 million yen. Whereas the production budget of *Koge* amounted to 145 million yen (including advertisement expenses) *Daydream* was made for less than 20 million yen (cf. Takahashi, "Gosha no shijo o doko made kutte iru ka," 189).
- ⁷⁷ Beginning with *Secret Place of Resentful Passion* (*Joen no anaba*; director Matsubara Jiro) Nikkatsu in May 1968 started distributing two Pink Films every month. For Nikkatsu this was a step to fill in the gap in its production schedule and to tighten ties with its lower rank cinemas (*kabansenkan*). By 1968 Nikkatsu's annual production was down to 48 films (4 films per month) and the lack of in-house productions resulted in a decline of contract cinemas from 1,048 (174 *senmonkan*, 874 *zenpurokan*) in December 1967 to 952 (166 *senmonkan*, 786 *zenpurokan*) in June 1968 (*Eiga nenkan 1969-nenban*, 243). With the distribution of Pink Films Nikkatsu tried to counter this downward development.
- ⁷⁸ For a detailed account see Domenig, "Shikakerareta sukyandaru."

MARKET OF FLESH AND THE RISE OF THE "PINK FILM"

Thoughts on the Extremely Private Pink Film of the 1970s

Kimata Kimihiko

The Birth of Idols and Stars

In 1968, the Japanese film industry was in a slump. Among the major film companies, Toei was the very first to zero in on low-budget, independently produced adult-oriented filmmaking—in other words, Pink Films—as a way to bring in a steady profit. This was the full-scale commencement of adult film production. Nikkatsu took this strategy to break through their business slump in 1970. In the same predicament, Daiei teamed up with them for distribution and established Dainichi Eihai; after a year of hard work, it collapsed. In November 1971, Daiei went bankrupt, and Nikkatsu marked a major change of course with the production of the new Roman Porno. Nikkatsu initially distributed its in-house-produced Roman Porno in double-bills; however, it was not long before they outsourced production to independent production companies to build triple-features. At the beginning of 1972, they fixed this approach. My first encounter with the Pink film was at one of these triple bills. The year was 1973. I immediately realized that one of the features in the package was not a Roman Porno. Even a youth of 14 years of age was able to gather that, compared to the adult films of Toei and Nikkatsu, the Pink Film felt distinctly cheap and cut-rate.

Those days, the production budget for Roman Porno ranged between 7 million to 7.5 million yen (not long after it was reach roughly 10 million yen). In the face of this, the budgets of independently produced Pink Films were between 2.5 million to 3.2 million yen. There were films shown in the Pink Film theaters, and then those that were produced under contracts with Toei and Nikkatsu for exhibition with their studio product in the Toei and Nikkatsu theater chains. Nikkatsu bought films for around 5 million yen. In any

case, when you think about the production budgets for Pink Films, this is indeed cheap and cut-rate.

However, on the one hand, while the major film companies like Toei and Nikkatsu started vigorously making adult films, Pink Film enjoyed an era of coexistence with the adult films of the majors. The mass media widely reported Nikkatsu's plunge into Roman Porno production, running stories on films, directors and actresses in various media. The Pinks benefited from this. Regular spectators didn't think about the difference between the Toei and Nikkatsu adult films and the Pink Films of independent production companies. So for the majors to embark on the production of adults films was a plus for the Pinks. Thanks to this, the 1970s was an era when regular moviegoers came to recognize the very existence of the Pink Film. You could call it a second golden age for the Pink Film.

Under these conditions, many stars and famous directors emerged from the Pink Film and the new Nikkatsu Roman Porno. Then, in the mid-1970s star directors, and actresses who might more properly be called idols than stars, achieved new levels of popularity and broke out from the limited framework of adult film. This also spread the recognition of the adult film.

The first actor to break out and become an idol was Azuma Terumi. She was a favorite disciple of the acting troupe supervised by Tani Naomi, who herself moved from the Pink Film to become an ace actress for the Nikkatsu Roman Porno. Her actual debut took place in the *jitsuen*, or "real performance"—skits that took place in the intermissions between Pink Films. Azuma Terumi signed a contract with Nikkatsu under Tani Naomi's tutelage, making her screen debut in a supporting role under Tani in the Nikkatsu Roman Porno; however, with her pretty looks, she leaped to idol-hood in the twinkling of an eye.

Actually, in the mid-1970s, Azuma Terumi's popularity was tremendous, especially among high school and college students. She went beyond the frame of Pink Film and Nikkatsu Roman Porno, ornamenting weekly gravure magazines and publishing photograph collections (similar to today's *shashinshū*). Movie posters she appeared in were ripped off and she had a regular radio show. Fans emerged and, banking on this, Azuma began appearing on television dramas and hosting TV shows. At the same time, when you look at what she was actually up to, she really did not appear in that much



Figure 7: Azuma Terumi (right) in *The Touch of White Beasts in the Darkness*.

Nikkatsu Roman Porno. Once she became popular, she started working in those other directions. Entering the 1980s, she ran manga rental stores and displayed an eagerness for management. However, what she is most notable for is, on the one hand being the first major idol, and on the other producing, writing, directing, acting and composing the music for the independent Pink Film *The Touch of White Beasts in the Darkness* (*Yami ni shiroki kedamontachi no kanshoku*, 1978). This was written by the prolific screenwriter Ishimori Shiro, who normally wrote regular feature films for Nikkatsu and Shochiku. However, the end product was horrible and, unable to realize distribution through the Pink Film chains, she released it through independent screenings and it was a miserable box-office failure.

However, her popularity never waned, and she came to the attention of Hashida Sugako, the screenwriter of NHK's morning drama *Oshin*. Becoming one member of the Hashida family, she appeared in dramas based on Hashida's scripts and for all practical purposes graduated from adult films and "naked work." At the same time, for Azuma's young fans, this was a conservative about face and they left her fandom. A love triangle scandal involving Tani Naomi left Azuma with the image of a difficult and scarred woman. Seeing the hard reality of their idols spoiled the fantasy for many fans. I was one of them.

However, Azuma Terumi's popularity and shifting persona led young people to new idols. There was Hara Etsuko, the favorite disciple of Ogawa Kazuhisa (aka Ogawa Kinya), who discovered Hara and put her in many Pink Films. She debuted in 1976. This was when Pink directors and crews, seeking to grow their wages, established an independent film association. In order to boycott Okura, who had fielded her with much effort, Ogawa Kazuhisa scouted the actress as a model for the youth magazine *Heibon Punch* (*Heibon punch*). As Ogawa's disciple, she appeared mainly in Okura films. While it may not have been so at the time of her debut, she steadily gained popularity thereafter.

Actually, Hara Etsuko's popularity in the late 1970s became fanatical thanks to her baby face, her small stature, and her own insistence that—despite acting in adult films—she was still a virgin. In contrast to Azuma Terumi this, along with her constant appearances in Pink Films, was probably the reason she was so loved. Her fame peaked in 1978 and she even appeared

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in the mass media, which called her “the Yamaguchi Momoe-chan of the Pink Film world.”¹

In December 1978 the Fact-finding Committee for Student Culture, which was composed of 64 groups from 60 universities across Japan, organized the “First Annual Idol Grand Prize.” Momoi Kaori and Takeshita Keiko won by a wide margin. The fan stratum included not only college students, but also high school students who could were supposedly barred from adult films; weekly magazines reported that the latter were organizing “fan clubs for Etsuko-chan made primarily of high school students.”² There were also many goods sold by Hara Etsuko, including a panel clock, records, and even a charm for college entrance exams emblazoned with “Goddess Hara Etsuko” (*Hara Etsuko Daimyōjin*).³

In 1978, I was a college freshman in Nagoya. Even at my university’s fall student festival, there was a “Hara Etsuko Pink Film Retrospective.” The screenings, held in university halls, were naturally filled with boys; but female students who had to that point never seen an adult film crowded the halls. I vividly remember, as if it were yesterday, sitting there gazing at the screen and holding my breath. Unfortunately, all the films were trash. Finally, being the hardcore cineaste that I was, I made of fun of them—“After all, this is all rubbish by veteran Okura directors who don’t give a shit”—and left in the middle of everything. Actually, a smart film fan would have ridiculed any film starring Hara Etsuko and wouldn’t have even gone, let alone make a big deal about these screenings. Film connoisseurs did make a big deal of the Hara Etsuko films Nikkatsu picked up, which were directed by Yamamoto Shinya. At the same time, one heard them complaining, “For Yamamoto Shinya’s Pink comedies, Hara Etsuko is inappropriate because she has no talent as a comedienne.” After that she signed a contract with Nikkatsu and appeared in their Roman Porno, but they were all poorly-made failures and even worse than the films in her Pink days. One heard her die-hard fans saying, “It sure would be nice if they put her in more decent films.”

The Slump, Wakamatsu Koji, and the Rise of Yamamoto Shinya

And what of the directors?

The first film I saw by Wakamatsu Koji, who was called the master of the Pink Film, was the Toei distributed (*Top Secret*) *Female Student: Ecstatic Part-Time Work* (*Marubi: joshigakusei kokotsu no arubaito*, 1972). I didn't think it was terribly interesting. Wakamatsu had slowed down his pace a bit, and was releasing vivacious films in the 1970s. What I felt when watching his new films was that, after his ATG collaboration of *Ecstasy of the Angels* (*Tenshi no kokotsu*, 1972) he clearly fell into a slump as a director. In other words, times had changed.

Immediately preceding the release of *Ecstasy of the Angels*, The Asama Cottage Incident occurred in Nagano Prefecture's Karuizawa (this was where the United Red Army held hostages). The captured Red Army members confessed to lynching many of their own members. *Ecstasy of the Angels* foreshadows this, but it was also seen to instigate the incident and became an enormous scandal. And from this United Red Army incident on, the New Left movement—which had peaked in 1968—suddenly turned inward and proceeded to turn violence towards its own. The masses came to be disillusioned by the fantasy of revolution. Having lost their goal, the term “apathy” (*shirake*) spread among the youth.

At some point at the end of the 1960s, the protest folk songs sung by young people turned into “4.5 mat folk songs” about leading a humble lifestyle with one's lover. Even this was expelled by the smooth pop sounds of New Music. As Bob Dylan sang, “The Times They Are a-Changin'.” However, in this case it was in a direction absolutely opposed to Dylan's prediction, as it had to do with fads extolling nothing other than consumption and a refined and hedonistic lifestyle. In this kind of era, it is easy to imagine Wakamatsu losing sight of an enemy to attack. I was hardly more than a child at the time and thought this way, so it's easy to imagine the feeling was even stronger for those that had watched Wakamatsu's films starting in the 1960s. Actually, Matsuda Masao, who was Wakamatsu's trusted companion, summed up this middle period in the following way:

Today in the fall of 1977, it is difficult to write criticism about Wakamatsu Koji. The reason is simple. For the sake of his

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livelihood, Wakamatsu started collaborating with ATG in 1971, releasing the epoch-making *Ecstasy of the Angels* the following year in 1972. Why did a director so full of energy become so confused?...It is unfortunate, but when he once again collaborated with ATG five years later on *Sacred Mother Kannon* (*Seibo Kannon daibosatsu*, 1977), he failed to strike a period on this slump...Wakamatsu Koji was overtaken by events of the early 1970s, and was passed by in the end...To be honest, through subjective efforts to surpass the aporia of the era, I discovered Wakamatsu Koji to be remarkably lazy. One can only be astounded by this over and over again.⁴

Outside of the example of *In the Realm of the Senses* (*Ai no koriida*, 1976), which he produced with Oshima Nagisa, my image of Wakamatsu Koji of the 1970s is the same as Matsuda Masao's. In the late 1970s, the trend to consider politics stupid was embraced across Japan. This was the beginning of the frivolous approach that peaked with the bubble economy of the late 1980s, and in this context Wakamatsu Koji's films were increasingly seen as behind the times.

Instead of Wakamatsu, the director that captured the overwhelming support of young film fans was Yamamoto Shinya. Even today, he appears as an entertainer (*tarento*) on NHK as a film connoisseur who knows the classics of anywhere, anytime. However, although he is nicknamed simply "director," the vast majority of viewers who see Yamamoto on the cathode ray tube have likely never seen one of his films. Or even if a film connoisseur that cares a bit watches one of the films available on video or DVD, they would argue with the assertion that he is like an ancestor who rejuvenates the Pink Film since the available films aren't all that good.

At the very least, there was a period when Pink films were completely identified with Yamamoto Shinya. Having experienced this Yamamoto boom in the mass media first hand, I would like to correct this impression.

Yamamoto Shinya was born in Tokyo in 1939. After graduating from college, he worked in the directing department of TV Asahi. In 1964 he contracted with Iwanami and became Hani Susumu's assistant director. This is quite a distinct career for a Pink Film director. In 1965 he switched to Pink Film. His debut was *Blooming Out of Season* (*Kuruizakaki*, 1965). At first, the

films were serious. Starting with his 21st film, *Good Sleeper* (*Nejozu*, 1968), he brought the comedic touch he loved and respected from Billy Wilder and Kawashima Yuzo to the Pink Film and made it his own. This caught the attention of some fans. Yamamoto garnered particularly high praise from the editor-in-chief of *Eiga geijutsu*, Ogawa Toru. Kawashima Nobuko, the editor-in-chief of the unique film magazine *Seijin eiga* (someone who probably worked under Ogawa), lauded Yamamoto Shinya's genius. Ogawa Toru once wrote in a weekly magazine,

Starting with *Room 48* (*Ozashiki shjubattai*, 1968), one suddenly understands his other films like *Good Sleeper* and *Evening Inflammation* (*Yoru no tadare*, 1967). One can note a hint of Nakahira Ko or the youthful Kinoshita Keisuke of *Woman* (*Onna*, 1948) in Yamamoto's energetic screen. As erotic comedy, it is not at all inferior to Kawashima Yuzo, Masumura Yasuzo or the American director Billy Wilder.⁵

This praise may go a bit too far, but it does indicate how influential Yamamoto Shinya was in those days. In 1969 he directed *The Story of the Women's Bath* (*Onnayu monogatari*) and *Widow's Boarding House* (*Mibojin geshbuku*), which kicked off entire series. Combined with his *Masher* (*Chikan*) series, Yamamoto's name became synonymous with these three series of films, which moved to distribution through Nikkatsu. However, at this point in time, Yamamoto Shinya became a name director, along with Watanabe Mamoru, under the supervision of Komori Kiyoshi at Tokyo Koei Studios.⁶

When I started watching Roman Porno and Pink Films in 1973, there were already Yamamoto Shinya retrospectives at mainstream film theaters. He was a popular director that could have five- or six-film retrospective programs or all-night screenings. Nineteen seventy-four was precisely the year that Yamamoto started distributing his Pink Films through Nikkatsu. These Nikkatsu-distributed films included *Document: Masher Group* (*Dokumento: chikan shudan*, 1974), the first installment of the *Masher* series, and the revival of *Widow's Boarding House* with *Semi-Documentary: Widow's Boarding House* (*Semi-dokumento: mibojin geshbuku*, 1974). After this, he directed new installments for these series one after another.⁷

The *Widow's Boarding House* series was so popular it could beat the main Nikkatsu Roman Porno. One reason for Yamamoto's exploding fame was

surely his move from Pink Films shown in independent theater chains to works shot for exhibition in Nikkatsu's own chain or theaters it directly contracted with. It must have been quite advantageous to be shown outside of the independent theater chains because the numbers of theaters, the interior design, and geographical locations for Roman Porno were all better. Furthermore, it meant that his films were seen by spectators who otherwise never went to Pink Films (there were no Pink Film fans who who eschewed mainstream films).

During the March 31, 1974 trial for the 1972 Nikkatsu Roman Porno disclosure incident, Yamamoto Shinya's *Man Who Likes Erotica* (*Daishikima*, 1971) was shown as an exhibit. Film critic Saito Masaharu attended the entire Nikkatsu Roman Porno trial and wrote about the situation in an excellent report. He watched *Man Who Likes Erotica* and was surprised by its high quality, writing, "A butcher's wife and mentally handicapped employee. The grotesque erotic love in *Man Who Likes Erotica* is expressed with an odd humor through the confident eye of an erotic author."⁸

Furthermore, on September 29, 1977, film critic Sato Tadao was called as a defense witness and, when asked about *Man Who Likes Erotica*, he said, "This type of film is not recognized by the major studios or television broadcasters. It is an excellent film."⁹ Yamamoto Shinya attended the trial every day along with Saito Masaharu, and took the witness stand for the defense in August 1977 to explain the intent behind *Man Who Likes Erotica*.¹⁰ I myself have not seen this film, but it is a black comedy about a young, mentally handicapped employee of a butchershop and the butcher's wife. After they have an affair, the boy dismembers the butcher and sells him off as quality meat.

From this one can probably sense the level of Yamamoto Shinya's popularity and abilities. In any event, by distributing Pink Films through the Nikkatsu chain, he established himself as the biggest hit maker in the Pink cinema of the 1970s.

In 1975 there was an event that brought Yamamoto attention from not just the Pink world, but also regular movie fans, and even the masses who know nothing about cinema. This was the "Have you seen Shinya?! Yamamoto Shinya One-Man-Show" retrospective held in the basement of Bungeiza Theater, in the Ikebukuro district of Tokyo. During the ten days from De-

ember 3-12, 1975, Yamamoto's films were screened one after the other. It was standing room only every day. Sports newspapers and general periodicals, not simply magazines specializing in film, picked up the event.¹¹ In the past, Wakamatsu Koji's popularity was backed up by the small theater called Sasori-za in the basement of ATG's Shinjuku Bunka Gekijo. They held multiple retrospectives of the director's work. This positioned Wakamatsu as something like the founder of a religious sect for young people, and the support the venerable Bungei-za gave to Yamamoto Shinya might have been similar. Through this event, Yamamoto Shinya came to the attention of the mass media in one stroke. In addition to this, the information magazine *Pia* held its first Pia Exhibition (now known as the Pia Film Festival) in 1977. From December 3 to 4, they had all night screenings of Yamamoto's films at Toei Oizumi Studios. Yamamoto and his regular player Nogami Masayoshi appeared at a talk show, and it was an enormous success.

Yamamoto Shinya's Glory and Estrangement

Yamamoto Shinya's general popularity may have been decisively built on his Nikkatsu-distributed film, but it's his Tokyo Koei films of the 1960s and early 1970s that are particularly rich.

In those days, the first films of his that I saw was *Love Bed-in* (*Ai no bed-doin*, 1971), a part-color film. It was about a young man who falls in love with a girl, and he ends up sleeping with the girl's mother. It's not long before one realizes this is a cynical parody of Mike Nichols' love story *The Graduate* (1967). When it comes to Pink Films, one often imagines gloomy, impoverished stories; however, this film is filled with gags and has not a whiff of gloominess. It was quite funny. It feels real when the youth at the center of the film practices putting on condoms, masturbates, but he first uses chewing gum on the tip of his penis to stop any leakage. When it comes to his first experience, there is a great gag where he also attaches the chewing gum before putting on the condom, but it all ends in failure before he can put it in.

Renovation of the Female Body Islands (*Nyotai retto kaizo*, 1972) was named after the best selling book *On the Renovation of the Japanese Islands*, which was being loudly promoted by Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei. It is a tragicomedy satirizing the book and centering on a man with a giant penis (Kubo Shinji)



Figure 8: Yamamoto Shinya

and a proprietor with an extremely small penis (Nogami Masayoshi). Yamamoto uses parody and satire as spice, and while it features the same anti-authoritarianism of Wakamatsu Koji it doesn't have the same combativeness. Since it addressed power and social conditions with sharp, satirical gags, his films had an anarchic humor that was very refreshing.

This was one example of how Yamamoto excelled at deploying a satirical spirit to subvert Eirin's proscriptions against showing pubic hair and genitalia, exposing them as nonsense. In *The Lives of Young Ladies* (*Yangu redi sei seikatsu*, 1972), rather than showing women's pubic hair to spectators, he recreates them, using an expert appraiser who uses a finely drawn picture to judge their pubes lushness, shape and length. This perfectly undermined Eirin. He also made *Bedsores* (*Tokoꝑumo*, 1972), which has a gag featuring a man losing his wedding ring when he pokes the genitals of a woman with his finger; but he uses a camera angle from inside the woman looking out. It was a winning idea. He must have had considerable confidence in pulling off these two gags, because he reprised the former in *Semi-Documentary: Introduction to Bushogonomy* (*Mosogaku nyumon*, 1975) and the latter gag in *Akatsuka Fujio's Gag Porno/Once More With Feeling* (*Akatsuka Fujio no gyagu poruno/Kibun wo dashite mo ichido*, 1979).

Special Love Triangle (*Tokushu sankaku kankei*, 1972) is the story of a married man who takes a mistress, and while circulating between the homes of the mistress and his wife he suffers a heart attack from overwork. One may think it is somewhat reminiscent of Mizoguchi Kenji's *Osaka Elegy* (*Naniva erejii*, 1936), but Yamamoto says his inspiration was the *rakugo* entitled "Manservant Lantern" (*Gonsuke chochin*).¹² When *rakugo* artist Tatekawa Danshi saw this, Yamamoto later became a *deshi* (disciple) after he became famous. Yamamoto's love of Kawashima Yuzo may also have come from Kawashima's comic masterpiece, *The Sun in the Last Days of the Shogunate* (*Bakumatsu taiyoden*, 1957), which was based on *rakugo*. And if one thinks about it, *Bedsores* is structured as an omnibus collection of humorous, erotic stories, just like a *rakugo* performance.

However, Yamamoto Shinya's reputation during the Tokyo Koei years was based on the *Masher* series and the *Women's Bath* series. What was always astounding to me was the special camerawork in the *Masher* series. He shot from an ultra-low camera angle, looking up a woman's skirt in a packed commuter train. For someone like me, only in my teens, these thrilling images

always left my heart pounding. No matter how amazing Wakamatsu Koji's rape scenes are thought to be, it was far more exciting to see a masher groping a woman from these camera angles—which embodied male desire—rather than showing sex directly. On top of this, his gift for swiftly switching these scenes into gags was impressive. It was hilarious. How did Yamamoto Shinya's countless gags affect the next generation of filmmakers? One gets a good sense for this by watching Takita Yojiro's Pink masterpiece, *Groper Train: Search for the Black Pearl* (*Chikan densha: Shitagai kensatsu*, 1984 [alt. title: *Chikan densha: Asa no tanoshimi*]). In one scene, the masher played by Takenaka Naoto is fingering a woman on a crowded train and loses his ring when he pulls out; Takita reprises the shot from within the woman's body, a crystallization of the grand legacy left by Yamamoto Shinya's work.

Women's Bath, Yamamoto's other popular series, started in reaction to Toei's mobilization of a large number of Pink Film actresses to start an "abnormal sexual love route" (*ijo seiai rosen*); essentially the idea was to show as many naked women as possible. They also thought that, unlike the rule-bound sex scenes, there was nothing terribly unusual or unnatural about nudity in a public bath so Eirin would probably overlook this work.

Women's Bath, Women's Bath, Women's Bath (*Onna yu, onna yu, onna yu*, 1970) uses intertitles to indicate the passing of time. In one scene an umbrella is tossed into a river and he inserts an intertitle saying, "The umbrella floats along One year later", and I almost fell out of my seat. This was a quote of the great Yamanaka Sadao's masterpiece *Shower of Coins* (*Koban shigure*, 1932), which used the same montage and intertitle! This film is no longer extant, but Yamamoto heard about the film from a Pink Film fanatic named Watanabe Mamoru.¹³

In *Women's Bath, Women's Bath, Women's Bath*, the two actors Nogami Masayoshi and Matsuura Yasushi play itinerant performers against the background of the women's baths of hot springs; in the last scene, they imitate the dancing of these traveling artists. One wouldn't think it's a device made for Pink Film. However, directors from subsequent generations have used it. For example, there is Watanabe Mototsugu's *Lusty Cinema at the Train Station: Playing Until Fainting in Agony* (*Ekimae yokujo shinema: monzetsu yugi*, 1991), and then the even younger Imaoka Shinji and his *Teenybopper Prostitution: Girls Who Want to Do It* (*Enjokosai monogatari: shitagaru onnatachi*, 2005; alt. title: *Frog Song*,

[*Kaeru no uta*]). We can trace the musical sequences in these films back to Yamamoto's work.

Finally, there is one last thing. About the time Yamamoto's *Women's Bath* series achieved popularity, TBS started airing the home drama *It's About Time* (*Jikan desu yo*, 1970-1975). This television show, with its unconventional direction, was broadcast between 1970 and 1975 and scored legendary ratings. It was produced and directed by Kuze Teruhiko. He was recognized as the only rival of Jissoji Akio, who left TBS for feature filmmaking. Kuze was a genius that made his name as a producer-director that could score the highest ratings. Because *It's About Time* was set at a Tokyo bathhouse (*sentō*), there were "service" glimpses of the women's bath in every episode. This itself became a hot topic, so much so that it's said that middle-aged fans were watching it just for these scenes.

According to Yamamoto Shinya's recollection, before Kuze made *It's About Time*, he asked Tokyo Koei for a private screening of Yamamoto's *Women's Bath* series.

In those days, it was quite something for television staff to come and ask to watch and borrow our films. I remember telling Kuze Teruhiko over the phone, "If it's OK with the company, it's fine with me." Then I watched the first episode that aired. And what do you know, these girls that were extras in my *Women's Bath* series—girls who were specialists in entering the bath—appeared on the TV series.¹⁴

It is highly likely that the films that Kuze watched for reference were *Women's Bath: Story of a Bath Assistant* (*Onna yu sansuke monogatari*, 1969) or *True Stories from the Bathhouse Watchstand* (*Bandai jitsuma monogatari*, 1970).

After 1974, Nikkatsu-contracted films became more prevalent. The *Widow's Boarding House* series and the *Masber* series were Yamamoto's two pillars, thanks to their unwavering popularity among young people. The plot of the *Widow's Boarding House* series involved a widow that ran a boarding house. Most of her boarders were college students or those studying for the college entrance exams. Each time, the story develops, getting big laughs for matching the college songs of actual schools with characters in the films. They always have the neighborhood greengrocer, fishmonger and cops. And in each



Figure 9: Kubo Shinji, the “jerk-off actor”.

outing the main character is Ozaki, who is constantly repeating the same grade, even though the widow offers to give him sex if he actually graduates. It's a comedy, where Ozaki peeps on the widow when she brings men home for sex, forgetting his troubles through masturbation. Usually, college stu-

dents coming from rural areas are brutal and wretched in the Pink Films, but in the case of the *Widow's Boarding House* the main character Ozaki does nothing but sit with toilet paper hanging from one hand in the middle of his room, which is filled with rubbish and manga, imagining the widow's body and masturbating. For students in those days, when they no longer were interested in political movements and anti-authoritarianism, these comical caricatures of college students were really interesting. Kubo Shinji, who had played romantic leads (*nimaimè*) up to that point, must have had a great change in his state of mind—playing Ozaki and spitting out ad-libbed gags like a machine gun. His character was special for his mix of audaciousness and hopelessness. It overwhelmed the spectators. Even today, I remember one film when, once again, Ozaki fails to graduate, masturbates over the sleeping figure of the widow, and at the instant he comes on her he cries out for no apparent reason: “Momoe-chan.....” This ad-lib by Kubo rocked the theater with laughter.

Actually, Kubo Shinji become known as the “*senzuri danyu*” (masturbation actor) or “*masukaki danyu*” (jerk-off actor), and teamed with Yamamoto Shinya he became very popular among college students. He became a regular feature of the evening newspapers and weekly magazines. If you looked at the table of contents for magazines in those days, there were headlines like “Kubo Shinji: I'll Do Only Porno Until I Tell People Something”¹⁵ and “This Man Bets Everything on His Groin.”¹⁶ He was even featured in regular magazines, not just those specializing in film. In fact, he had fan clubs at various women's colleges, which is pretty amazing. There was even an episode where the school fair at one women's college had an auction for the exclusive rights to Kubo's groin, and there was a successful bid. One can imagine why the actresses of the Pink Film were popular, but the popularity of an actor that does nothing but masturbate must be unprecedented anywhere, any time.

One important aspect of Yamamoto's work is the ensemble of regular actors that have their own peculiarities, such as Kubo Shinji. Matsuura Yasushi, Sakai Katsuro, Nogami Masayoshi, Yoshida Jun, Tako Hachiro..... Even though this is Pink Film, which supposedly trades on women's bodies, for some reason he ended up continually using the same regular actors, just like John Ford. They were actors with individuality that towered above the rest, and were even more colorful than the actresses.

THOUGHTS ON THE EXTREMELY PRIVATE PINK FILM

First, there is the masturbation specialist Kubo Shinji. He is followed by Sakai Katsuro, who was particularly adept at homosexual characters. Sakai made no secret of his fascination with homosexuality, and took his mania so far as to own a clothing store for transvestites. He'd toss away lovers as fast as he took them up, and occasionally those lovers would come out of the movies. And, of course, there is Tako Hachiro, who was supposedly the model for the famous *Tomorrow's Joe* (*Ashita no Jo*) manga series. With his slight figure, one would never guess that he became champion in the fly-weight division of Japanese boxing. He even had injuries from his boxing days; having lost control of one eye and one ear, he became a character actor because of his strange, lispy Japanese. He once had the ambition to become a comedian, and had the ability to flop down perpendicularly. So he was a fine addition to the Yamamoto cast, and usually played the role of a policeman. Tako Yaro's legendary gag was from *jitsuen* between Pink Film screenings; in the middle of a bed scene, he would suddenly turn to the audience and in faltering Japanese cry out, "We're fighting a war in Vietnam, is this acceptable?!" The movie theater would rock with laughter.¹⁷

Kuze Teruhiko, who had become a top producer with the high ratings of *It's About Time*, wanted to put this character actor on the Braun tube. He had Tako Hachiro play a bizarre punk in the TBS drama *Mu* and its sequel *Mu Family* (*Mu ichizoku*, both 1979). He became very popular (and after that, died in a 1985 accident).

Entering the 1980s, Yamamoto Shinya became popular as a reporter specializing in sexual customs on late night television. His clever and witty style of speech was so successful that a major manufacturer of mother's milk goods hired him for a television commercial. Going from Pink Film director to "a giant hit with the middle-aged housewives of commercial cinema!", he experienced a splendid transformation into a high-brow entertainer.¹⁸ Thus, Yamamoto Shinya is surely the figure emerging from the Pink Film to achieve the greatest success, which continues to this very day.

However, Yamamoto's films, which always used ensemble acting and adlibs by his regular performers from around the time of the retrospective at the Ikebukuro Bungeiza, but he clearly became a mannerist. I watched this happening in real time, and thought a number of the early films were far more interesting than what he did when work increased after 1975 and Nikkatsu started distributing his films. To the degree his popularity became

generalized, his satire quickly disappeared. The toughest film fans started saying things like, “Yamamoto’s films are like toothless Pink versions of the Tora-san series.” This was no mere jealousy; Yamamoto Shinya came under sincere criticism like this:

The *talento* Yamamoto Shinya probably intends to perform the character of an erotic humorist that directs Pink Films. A representative of the porn world has the fate of someone who sees himself as a “pornocrat.” Even “Shinya Cinema”’s theater of the absurd is nothing more than a legacy of the old Japanese slapstick of Saito Torajiro. The attitude that aggressively threatens this *rakugo-like* world (for it is not *rakugo* itself) will see this as one and the same as Yamada Yoji’s *Tora-san* series and consider it the greatest enemy to efforts to create a new Japanese cinema. Therefore, I have not covered Yamamoto Shinya in this “Twenty-year History of Pink”... Yamada Yoji and Yamamoto Shinya are homogenous because the the latter’s early “poison” has not continued to the present-day. *Widow’s Boarding House*, which has become a series, gets more superficial with every outing.¹⁹

Written by critic Suzuki Yoshiaki, this dissatisfaction is spot-on. Actually, when the *Widow’s Boarding House* series entered 1976, it swiftly became alarmingly mannerist. Until the mid-1970s, the plots of the *Masher* series inevitably featured salarymen and bureaucrats that would forget their circumstances, sing the praises of freedom, and form bonds of friendship and create alliances by becoming train mashers. One could see the influence of René Clair’s *À Nous la Liberté* (1931). Or there are also all the gags coming from his beloved Billy Wilder. However, he retreats from poisonous parody and anarchic gags, devolving into skeletal stories dripping with a moist and gloomy pathos. For example, his *Encounter with a Masher* (*Chikan to no sogu*, 1978) is a straightforward Pink remake of Billy Wilder’s *The Apartment* (1960), except it’s nothing but a human comedy with none of the spirit. Continuing with *Porno Chan-chaka-chan* (*Poruno chan chaka chan*, 1978) Hara Etsuko, who moved over to Yamamoto Shinya’s Nikkatsu-distributed films, was supposed to be like Shirley MacLaine; but she is clearly miscast and the only reason to see the film is Tako Hachiro’s off-beat performance.

THOUGHTS ON THE EXTREMELY PRIVATE PINK FILM

As Yamamoto Shinya's popularity spread, his ranking as a "cultural talent" (*bunkajin tarento*) increased, his network of friends and acquaintances grew, and in 1977 he participated in the creation of the Omoshiro Group (lit. "interesting group"). First on the membership list was manga artist Akatsuka Fujio, followed by television writer Takahira Tetsuro, Taki Daisaku, and the yet to become famous Tamori, Tokoro Joji, and stage actor Tabé Hajime (the leader of the troupe WAHAHA Honpo). Teaming up with these members, Yamamoto Shinya directed *Akatsuka Fujio's Gag Porno/Once More With Feeling* and his first mainstream film, *Shimo-Ochiai Yakitori Movie (Shimo-Ochiai yakitori mubi, 1979)*.

Just as suspected, these two films, made with a flaccid direction that transparently recycled old, tried and true gags, were total failures. This is probably when Yamamoto Shinya finally stopped being a film director. Of his subsequent films only one is worth watching. Indeed, Yamamoto's career as a director ends with his 1985 film *Midori Komatsu's Sexy Beauty Mark (Komatsu Midori no suki bokuro)*, and his title of "film director" becomes nothing more than a nickname. Unfortunately, there are few examples of films extant from Yamamoto's most interesting period before the 1980s. However, Yamamoto's pioneering *Masher* series, which started with the 1975 *Groper Train (Chikan densha)*, established a legacy that directors like Inao Minoru (presently named Fukamachi Akira) and Takita Yojiro carry on.

Nakamura Genji and Takahashi Banmei

Around the time Yamamoto Shinya's popularity was hot, veteran producer Mukai Kan (who had worked extensively with Wakamatsu Koji) regularly released excellent films through Toei. Because of the recession in the Japanese film world the studio was propping up its business with the twin pillars of the *yakuza* genre and adult films. Watanabe Mamoru's direction was also unusually satisfying. However, the vast majority of veteran film directors treated this as nothing more than routine work and their direction lacked freshness. Why these directors were supported by the studios and entrusted with film after film is a mystery. Anyone that experienced this era surely feels the same. At the same time, this sentiment could be extended to the present moment as well. It is true that with any genre one finds only a handful of jewels in a mountain of garbage; however, when it comes to the Pinks, films

are made fast and cheap with little help from the veteran companies and less intelligence, so the number of garbage films is particularly large.

In this situation, a second generation of directors caught the attention of cineastes: particularly Nakamura Genji and Takahashi Banmei.

Nakamura Genji was born in Ibaraki Prefecture in 1946. Receiving the influence of Wakamatsu Koji's cinema, he entered Wakamatsu Productions in 1967. After that he moved to Kokuei and worked as an assistant director for Yamashita Osamu, Mukai Kan, and Umezawa Kaoru. In 1971, he debuted through Yoyogi Chu's Purima Planning with *Total Lesbian Love* (*Kanzen naru doseiai*, 1971). The first film to achieve widespread attention was his 32nd effort, *Semi-Document: Swooning Virgin* (*Semidokyumento: Shojō shisbin*, 1977). Upon its release, this was first Nakamura film I'd seen, and it was a memorable encounter. Unlike Takahashi Banmei, who I will touch on in a moment, Nakamura Genji sold his films to Nikkatsu, starting with his debut *Total Lesbian Love* and including *Swooning Virgin* being no exception. They were paired in double features with works from Nikkatsu's Roman Porno series. In the mid-1970s starlet Ogawa Kei was Nakamura's muse. I saw these films at the time, and may get their finer details wrong, but these films are no longer possible to see so allow me to summarize their stories.

In the first scene, a young woman (Ogawa Kei) stands near a window. A grassy bank covered with grass. With the wind blowing and the grass rustling, a young man (Kusunoki Masamichi) chases a girl (Ogawa Kei). Cut back to the woman standing at the window. She mutters, "What was that person crying over...What was that..." Then the film's tense turns back and the couple's first encounter is described. The young man leaves his village in a group to find work in Tokyo. He falls in platonic love with the woman, who he sees only once on a train. The woman appears wealthy (she might be a prostitute). He is fired from work. Living a life of despair in Tokyo, he becomes a host in hopes of making fast money. He goes to a love hotel with a female customer, where he happens to see the woman he's platonically in love with accompanying a middle-aged man. It's a terrible shock. The next scene returns to the beginning of the film. Man chasing a woman. He finally catches her and, crying, rapes her.

In this scene, Nakamura shuts out the sound of the fierce wind and instead plays the Minami Ranbo song "En Route" ("*Tojo nite*").²⁰ The song is

colored by lyrics like, “The wind blows fiercely. Foolish past, far too lewd. On the road, my dream was crushed en route. Was that past an illusion?” Sometimes, the music and its lyrics blended with the woman’s cries as she’s raped. In past films, a scene with an erotic rape would show the arms, legs, and facial expressions of the woman. However, here the camera position shows only the figure of a woman being recklessly raped by a man, enveloped by the grass blowing in the strong wind; then, suddenly, the film cuts to a close up of the mud-splattered, tear-stained face of the woman being raped. This is followed by a scene in the interrogation room of the police. The woman can’t remember the face of the man. After the deposition, the woman stands at the window. This is the first image of the film. She mysteriously mutters, “What was that person crying over...What was that...” This is the end of the film.

To be honest, I was much more moved by *Swooning Virgin* than the Nikkatsu Roman Porno film it was projected with. My colleagues felt the same and often said, “Pink Films repeatedly show the twisting and turning lives of young men who leave the countryside for Tokyo, but no Pink Film has captured this with such lyricism.” I only saw it once. However, I remember constantly humming “En Route.” Actually, it seems Nakamura Genji himself agreed that his *Swooning Virgin* was particularly well-done, according to an interview he gave years later:

To be honest, my directorial method largely develops on location. Of course, I have a pre-conceived plan before going to the location. However, when you actually get there, every performer is a little different. It’s like things are decided when we glare at each other there...In that sense, my greatest success was probably *Swooning Virgin*...That’s about the time when I started using this method. Before and after that, my directorial method differed...One way or another I found my own method, you know? So with *Swooning Virgin* my method itself changed, and took a form closest to my own thinking.²¹

Nakamura Genji also has a comedy series parodying the famous Truck Rascals series (*Torakku yaro*, 1975-1979), with titles like *Truck SEX Rascals: Late Night Route* (*Torakku SEX yaro: Poruno shinyabin*, 1975) and *Truck SEX Rascals: One-Shot Game* (*Torakku SEX yaro: Ippatsu shobu*, 1976). However, he made far more sentimental youth films, lyrical representations of the dirty

and gloomy lives led by youth from the countryside. *The stars of 1970s Pink Film* were Ogawa Kei and Kusunoki Masamichi. Murai Minoru, who is sometimes called the father of Pink Film, claims that Nakamura Genji's masterpiece is *Red Prostitute: Pierce* (*Akai shofu: Tsukisasu*, 1981), but I have not seen this film.²² There is a film called *Wife—OL—Female Student: Rape* (*Hitozuma—OL—joshi gakusei boko*, 1980), which was based on Pierre Choderlos de Laclos' *The Dangerous Liaisons* (1782) and adapted from a script by Toda Hiroshi entitled *Professional Rape: Like a Beast* (*Purofessionaru reipu: Yajo no yo ni*), which won the Best Screenplay by a Newcomer award from *Zoom-Up* (which is voted on by the public); one clearly sees the influence of Nakamura Genji in this film.

Most people consider *Wet Lips: Supply Hot* (*Nureta kuchibiru: Shinayaka ni atsuku*, 1980) Nakamura Genji's masterpiece, and I must agree. An aspiring screenwriter (Kusunoki Masamichi) runs into a woman (Ogawa Kei) and drops a screenplay he meant to mail in order to enter into a contest. It becomes soaking wet. Feeling responsible, the woman helps him rewrite the screenplay at a cafe. One day, the two coincidentally meet again, become friendly and start living with each other. There is another man, also a screenwriter. The woman he is living with throws herself at a television producer in order to get his screenplay accepted. On the happy day that his screenplay is broadcast, he plunges into despair when he sees that they revised his story without permission. He and his lover commit double suicide. At the very same time, Kusunoki and Ogawa are watching the program. Not realizing their actual feelings, they are delighted at their friend's success and make a celebratory phone call. The friend and his lover are cold. Kusunoki and Ogawa cannot understand why, at the moment they grasp success, the two commit suicide. With Kusunoki's career going nowhere, Ogawa starts a relationship with the producer. This results in the production of one of his scripts, but he soon comes to know that it was all thanks to the sacrifice of her body. He realizes that their love life will not last long. Anticipating their split, the two take the stage at a marathon kiss competition.

After all is said and done, the encouragement and bodily self-sacrifice of Ogawa Kei and the tenderness of the earnest Kusunoki Masamichi were the strongest aspects of this film. There were no films up to that point with that kind of powerful sex scene. The intensely bitter scene where the two, predicting their parting, make love for the last time is heartbreaking. Over the

images we hear their dialogue: “We’ve only known each other for a couple weeks, but it seems like we’ve been living together forever.” “You are dazzling—your tenderness, your strength—I love you so much.” It’s almost like a sentimental youth film, but this tender-hearted sentimentalism is what makes Nakamura Genji so good.

Nakamura Genji took charge of his own Genji Productions, where he made his films. At one point, he renamed it Ozu Productions. In the 1980s many young directors got their start there, including Hiroki Ryuichi, Ishikawa Hitoshi, and Mochizuki Rokuro.



There is also Takahashi Banmei, who was born in Nara City in 1947. He started as an assistant director for Shindo Koe. After that he worked with nearly all the big Pink directors with the exception of Wakamatsu Koji. He made his debut at Nishihara Giichi’s Aoi Productions with *Escaped Rapist Criminal* (*Fujo boko dassoban*, 1972). *Kill the Budding Beauty!* (*Tsubomi o yaru!*, 1977), his fourth film and shot in his third year quickly garnered attention. Hearing good things about the film, I caught it at a second-run theater and confirmed its high reputation.

In the following year of 1978 he made a number of fine films, including *A Female Teacher: Tightly Bound* (*Aru jokyoshi: Kinbaku*), *Japanese Torture* (*Nihon no gomom*, 1978), and *Female Prison: Lynch* (*Sukemusho: rinchi*) (*Jokeimusho: Shikei* (*sukemusho: rinchi*), 1978). *Japanese Torture* was a hit. His fresh approach to directing SM cinema and rape scenes was favorably compared to the more experienced directorial power of first-generation filmmakers like Wakamatsu Koji, Mukai Kan, and Watanabe Mamoru. Continuing in 1979, he made a series of SM bondage films starring Oka Naomi and Hino Mayuko, such as *Whip and Bondage* (*Muchi to kinbaku*, 1979) and *Bondage Love Affair* (*Kinbaku no jōji*, 1979).

Starting in 1980, he made one film after another based on the winners and strong competitors in the *Zoom-Up* new screenwriters competition. With films like *Girl Prostitute* (*Shojo jofu*, 1980), *Bound and Bizarre Wife* (*Kinbaku ryokizuma*, 1981), *Japanese Lynching* (*Nihon no rinchi*, 1981), *Strange Pleasure: Forbidden Lips* (*Ijo na kairaku: Kinshin*, 1981), critics became impressed by his anti-estab-

lishment stance and powerful direction of torture and rape scenes. Soon he was being called the successor of Wakamatsu Koji.

Rather than these bondage films, I was always taken with the earlier works representing wandering rural youth, like *Kill the Budding Beauty!* and *A Female Teacher: Tightly Bound*. I also thought highly of the later films extending this theme—bitter youth films like *Woman Assailed* (*Yarareta onna*, 1981), the painfully sad *Attack the Girl!* (*Shojo o osou!*, 1979) about incest between a brother and sister, and *Gasping in Pleasure: Attack the Girl* (*Yorokobi no aegi: Shojo o osou*, 1981). The Japanese Motion Picture Code of Ethics Committee (Eirin) was quite intrusive in those days. One could say that this treatment of incest and taboos was a connection to Wakamatsu Koji and his spirit of resistance. At the same time, filled with pathetic calls of anger, there is a bending lyricism one does not see in Wakamatsu.

In *Attack the Girl!*, a man (Shimomoto Shiro) is driven to despair by his capricious mother after the death of his father. At the beginning of the film he flees to Tokyo with his mentally retarded sister (played by Tori Akemi). He finds work where it can appear his sister is his wife, but the owner of the business is *yakuza*. The siblings are forced to perform for Blue Films (the amateur version of Pink Films) and private sex shows (*ozashiki shirokurosho*). In the process, the sister awakens to her sexuality and begins yearning for her brother as a member of the other sex. What's more, she is pregnant with his child. Facing a tragic fate, things get worse and worse for the two. In the film there are scenes that express the brother's feelings for his sister, such as when he washes her in the garden and she's wearing nothing but a straw hat. But the last scene moved me with its devastating and sad hopelessness, when the brother slowly falls, carrying a baguette the sister loved so much. There was also a scene where the sister experiences her first menstruation, and Takahashi cuts to a river with red flowers floating in the current. This is less an influence of Suzuki Seijun than a literalization of Tsuge Yoshiharu's masterpiece of the *gekiga*,²³ *Red Flowers* (*Akai hana*).

On this connection to *gekiga*, *Gasping in Pleasure: Attack the Girl* is also important. It drew on Minamata Disease for material. A father and daughter live in a fishing village devastated by industrial pollution. The dream of the student movement has been crushed. And a son wheeling between love and hate turns his back on the big city and returns to the village. The daughter, who is mentally handicapped from having eaten fish from the polluted ocean,

is repeatedly raped by a village man. And both the father and brother (Shimomoto Shiro) respond to her pathetic badgering to “hold” her by indiscriminately sleeping with her. It is this kind of pathetic incest story. Its set up and development are just like the *gekiga* entitled *A Record of Juicy Sex* (*Seishokuki*) Miyaya Kazuhiko. Devoted fans of Miyaya talk about the film to this day.²⁴ It is less a prosecution of society than a melodrama filled with bitter resignation. Rather than blaming society, it’s a melodrama filled with frustrating sadness and melancholy.

With their mentally handicapped sisters innocently asking to be held, both *Attack the Girl!* and *Gasp in Pleasure: Attack the Girl* have sex scenes that are quite sorrowful and bitter. At the same time, this is also the form of “shackles” we often find in melodrama: that is, incest.

Another aspect of Takahashi Banmei’s cinema that I find impressive is his use of excellent music. In early films like *Attack the Girl!* and *Gasp in Pleasure: Attack the Girl* he chooses well-known songs for representing the lost attitude of the youth from rural areas. Also, he often uses parodic versions of songs for singing scenes. One feels empathy for these characters when watching these scenes.

Those in the know heard Kinomi Nana’s “Self-Satisfied Waltz” (*Unubore warutsu*) in *Woman Assaulted*, and there was a Morita Doji song in *Attack the Girl!*. Those days, Morita Doji made her name her dark folk songs; when pop became the mainstream new music, fans wouldn’t admit to liking Morita under any circumstances. She was like a hidden Christian (*kakushi kurisuban*) folk singer.

I used Morita Doji two or three times. Of course, without permission. It was always that way in that period. Actually, I got an offer—from the manager, I suppose—to project *Attack the Girl!* behind Morita during a *jitsuen*. If it’s true, it’d be a problem. That’s how I understood it. I also used Morita in *Delinquent* (*Furyo*, 1993); around that time trendy dramas used her for their theme songs (as covers)...They were probably so jealous they just imitated her...Back when I was an assistant director, I lived in a single 4.5 mat room. I remember sitting in that room listening to Yamazaki Hako and Doji, drinking sake all alone—pretty dark, isn’t it? (laughs)²⁵

Yamazaki Hako and Morita Doji were both folks singers, best know for the self-reflective folk of the 1970s. However, at the same time, they also wrote melancholy songs that reeked of a shallow sentimentalism. These cannot be dismissed, something I felt back then and today as well. Yet for this reason, Takahashi Banmei's music choices were criticized in the following way back in the day:

I have criticized Takahashi Banmei for *Attack the Girl!*, even impertinently, at Shinjuku watering holes. To be specific, when he shows how the daily lives of the brother (Shimomoto Shiro) and sister (Tori Akemi) fall apart, he uses a Morita Doji song. I picked a fight over this, because he encouraged spectators to cry. They are assisted by music, when he should be showing us through the visual subject.²⁶

While there was this kind of criticism (putting aside the criticism that he was using famous songs without permission), it was moving to have this music supporting the sentimentalism of this taboo love, where the brother and sister form a loving bond bothering no one through incest. And while one might feel that it was a rather superficial darkness, it was perfect timing to play these songs by Yamazaki and Morita for their hidden fans.

Later, in Takahashi Banmei's *New World of Love* (*Ai no shinsekai*, 1993), he portrays strong but sentimental women through the positive image of the heroine, an SM madam (Suzuki Sawa). It was positively received, but it had a scene where she runs down a street at sundown, a Yamazaki Hako tune playing in the background. While the light, jaunty song betrayed Yamazaki's dark image, it subtly matched the scene for reasons hard to pin down, and one gave into a bracingly fresh feeling. For his representations of an anti-establishment spirit, torture and incest, Takahashi Banmei has a powerfully masculine image as a director. However, he has also been reconsidered as a director known for shining moments for women.

Woman Assaulted was based more on Robert Enrico's *Les Aventuriers* (1967)—a love triangle story that was a huge hit among Japanese—than François Truffaut's *Jules et Jim* (1962). While it portrays a transcendental love triangle, *Woman Assaulted* is a masterpiece that actually describes the end of youth. Because it is released on DVD, it is relatively easy to appreciate the

film. Even today, one cannot suppress deep emotions when watching the wonderful last dance, with “Conceited Waltz” playing in the background.

Looking quickly at these kinds of Takahashi Banmei films, one appreciates how the things he was sparking through filmmaking were connected to the things he was strongly condemning. In this sense, it is extremely interesting to see how Unit Five was created by his old assistant directors, initiating a new Pink Film movement.²⁷

The Conditions of Pink Film in Rural Cities: On Live Performances

Compared to the present-day, there were a number of important structural differences between Tokyo and rural cities in the Pink Film industry before the 1970s.

In particular, there were cases where films that failed in Tokyo were given new, suggestive names for their Kansai runs. For example, there are articles describing how the Japanese distribution company that released Jane Fonda’s Oscar-winning *Klute* (1971) changed the title to *Call Girl*, but it was a miserable failure in Tokyo. So they waited about half a year and started its rural run in the Kansai region with the title *New York Prostitution Zone*.²⁸ In the case of Pink Films, this use of names for different regions was hardly unusual. For example, in 1968 there was an ad for *Intense Cares* (*Hageshii aibu*), a film by Yamashita Osamu that was produced and distributed by World Pictures; under the title, they put *Kansai Title: Sleeping Makeup* (*Negesho*).²⁹ Indeed, even today they change the titles of Pink Films for re-release, and title changes are an everyday practice whenever a film is released on videograms or DVDs, or broadcast on cable television.

Furthermore, in the areas west of Kansai—such as Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Tottori, and Shimane—the regulations surrounding the posters and signs for adult films are far stricter. Therefore, in 1984 when there were attempts to revise national laws governing entertainment and amusement and control including adult film titles and the permitted areas for posting posters, the approaches to adult film exhibition changed depending on the region—including titles and *jitsuuen*.

実演と映画

金髪ベット大会
中国ベット他多数

毎日実演あり
(31日まで)
実演時間
① 3時
② 6時
③ 9時
(土曜のみ)
④ 11時

大江文化
TEL 611-5013

本日限死女高生にたいな遊び
22→23 蕩色ぼけ込み

Figure 10: *Jitsuen* and film advertisement from the Oe Bunka Gekijo.

Consider the example of Nagoya, where I was born and raised. It is the third largest city after Tokyo and Osaka, and located right between these two cities. Let's look at 1973, when I started watching adult films. In 1973, Tokyo's population was 11,276,235 people, and there were 313 movie theaters in its 23 districts. In comparison, the population of Aichi Prefecture, which contains Nagoya, is 5,553,538 people; it had 150 theaters. Of these, 76 were in Nagoya City.³⁰ This hardly compares to Tokyo, but this was the period just before the collapse of block booking by the majors (Shochiku, Toei, Toho and Nikkatsu). Nagoya was home to a number of world-famous companies—starting with Toyota—was proud of having the highest savings rate in Japan, and was known as fertile ground for business. Foreign films were released in double features. In the second-run theaters, triple and quadruple feature programs were not unusual. Furthermore, in addition to the movie theaters, until the 1970s Nagoya was known for a rich experimental film and cineclub movement, so one cannot think that the conditions for film exhibition were all that bad. However, in the 1980s those conditions took a steep and swift downturn.

THOUGHTS ON THE EXTREMELY PRIVATE PINK FILM

Below are the main theaters that I frequented to watch Pink Films:

- Teatoru Kibo (lit. “theater of hope”) (476 seats, est. 1948, Nishi-ku, initially Shochiku chain)
- Osu Meigaza (380 seats, est. 1950, Chuo-ku, initially repertory theater for foreign films)
- Endoji Gekijo (250 seats, est. 1951, Nishi-ku, initially Shintocho chain)
- Hataya Shinema (150 seats, est. 1951, Atsuta-ku, initially repertory theater for foreign films)
- Oe Bunka Gekijo (260 seats, then 198 seats, est. 1953, Minami-ku, initially Daiei, Toho, foreign film releases)³¹

In addition to these, there were the Imaike Chikagekijo and the Nayabashi Gekijo, which were gay specialty theaters called “*battenba*” (“cruising spots”, lit. “developing places”). These were second-run theaters with triple features. They would include one adult film, followed by a Toei *yakuza* film or some mainstream films. Furthermore, and this is not in Nagoya, but depending on the region it seems there were *battenba* that would show Ken Russell and Luchino Visconte films; this was probably because it was before 1982, when the first domestic gay porno was produced.

In any case, among the movie theaters listed above only Teatoru Kibo was a first-run theater. Oe Bunka Gekijo mixed first run films with art films. The rest were so-called repertory theaters or second-run theaters. They were all old buildings that were built back when the film industry was steadily expanding. And they all switched to Pink Film when the film industry slumped and they needed fast and reliable profits.

Teatoru Kibo was just inside the Hankagai shopping center, in front of Nagoya Station. It was apparently in the Shochiku chain at first, and could accommodate the most spectators. This theater’s main selling point was “film and *jitsuen*.” The catch phrase on newspaper advertisements was always “Zubari! Fun Films Aimed at Adults!” In 1972 for New Year’s, Tani Naomi’s troupe made their live debut in Nagoya. After that in 1974 Tani’s first disciple, Azuma Terumi, previewed her *jitsuen* in Teatoru Kibo before opening in Tokyo.

In the 1970s Osu Meigaza became a repertory theater specializing in Pink Films and Nikkatsu Roman Porno. They frequently showed bills of old Pink Films. It was here that I saw revivals of Wakamatsu Koji's 1960s masterpieces, the venerable Shindo Koe's *Snow Horizon* (*Yuki no hate*, 1965, alt. *Seishun o chitai*), Umezawa Kaoru's *Wet Peony: Five-man Rape Episode* (*Nurebotan: gonin bokoben*, 1970), Takeda Yuki's *Lecherous Life: Mubomatsu* (*Koshoku ichidai: Mubomatsu*, 1969), and Takechi Tetsuji's *Black Snow* (*Kuroi yuki*, 1965).

Endoji Gekijo became a repertory house that showed five to six adult films every day. They'd put together special retrospectives of anything—Toei, Nikkatsu, Pink Films—so this is where I usually went. The projectionist was an old acquaintance, so he'd often sneak me in for free. At the end of the 1970s, it established a manga library, and starting in the 1980s, they also added a video library. It was a trailblazer in this respect, because they collected everything from porn films to adult videos, foreign and domestic art films, not to mention cult films. As a system for viewing, it was quite handy. It was the kind of place where one could see all the abnormal sexual love films by Ishii Teruo all at once in 1974.



Hataya Shinema showed triple features of spaghetti westerns at the beginning of the 1970s. Before long, it became a repertory house specializing in adult film. In this theater, there was a stage known as the *debeso* (lit. “protruding belly button”) that stretched from the middle of the stage into the audience. It is unclear when it was constructed, but in the 1970s, it was used for *jitsuen*. Between around 1976 to 1978, the Nagoya Shineasuto (currently called the Nagoya Shinamateku) was a kind of center point for film culture in Nagoya, which did not have a permanent theater. They used this theater, so watching French New Wave films and Oshima Nagisa retrospectives in an adult theater with a *debeso* was a strange experience. They showed programs of four to five films in one program.

Oe Bunka Gekijo also built a *debeso* stage, which was used exclusively for *jitsuen*. These were sexy shows little different from the skits at Teatoru Kibo. They did vulgar acts like a “*kakeshi* (wooden doll) bed show” or “*tengu* show.”³² Not being of age at the time, I was unable to go to many of these vivid shows. Wakamatsu Koji's *Sexual Reincarnation: Woman Who Wants to Die* (*Segura magura: Shinitai onna*, 1970) was a regular film; however, they often

showed this kind of film, along with works from Roppo Films and Shintocho. This theater failed as a movie theater in the last half of the 1970s and turned into a strip theater called the Derakkusu Oe. They used the *debeso* as they found it. Unlike the rather reserved stripping typical of Nagoya up to that point, I heard there was a particularly vulgar style the “Derakkusu” chain (based in Kansai) was known for. Just as was gossiped, this was an extreme style of stripping called a “chopping board show” (*manaita sho*) with actual sex acts, a style unknown to Nagoya at the time. I went only once, but was so weak I remember running away. This is a digression, but Kansai was generally known for more extreme forms of sex entertainment, and not simply in the movies. Aside from the strip shows, the 1970s and 1980s saw panty-less cafes and one novel form of sex entertainment after another. These trends always migrated eastward to Tokyo, the normal state of affairs.

Now let us consider the relationship of *jitsuen* and the Pink Film.

As with the prewar *rensageki*,³³ one would expect a form of entertainment that linked *jitsuen* with projected films. However, in the 1970s, most of the *jitsuen* was just that—an independent play and attractions. There was a rich combination of period dramas and modern day dramas. There were shows where one could see a fleeting glimpse of a thigh or breast past the hem of a kimono or negligee. There were also bath shows and S&M shows. To be honest, it was pretty much everything from the best to the worst. Azuma Terumi, who had gone independent from the Tani Naomi Gekidan, was popular at the time and formed her own troupe.³⁴ They performed at strip theaters and Pink Film specialty houses. There are articles from the time ridiculing their crude performances.

The triumphant Tokyo performance was held at the Kabukicho Nikkatsu in Shinjuku. They cancelled part of an all nighter and two performances, at 7:00 and 2:00. The performance, held on a narrow “stage” in front of the screen, was entitled *Dancing Girl Cruelty: Wed Bud (Odoriko mujo: Nuretsubomi)*. It was a sad story about a dancing girl tricked by a *yakuza* and sold to a travelling sideshow. Of course, Azuma and three actresses were naked in no time. There was a lesbian whipping scene, a rape scene, and one enthusiastic performance after another. When one man in love with Azuma called out, “I love you!” The theater filled with “I love you,

too!” “Me, too!” “Me, too!” When Azuma greeted them by saying, “I’m sorry that we don’t have the real thing for you,” the audience responded, “It’s OK!” They ignored the impossible for the possible. When the *jitsuen* ended, about a third of the customers vacated their seats. The ones that stayed said, “The admission price was same as always, and it feels special, but it still felt a little like a college arts festival, you know.”³⁵

Because Azuma Terumi was at the height of her popularity, this article is basically what one would expect. Actually, Tokyo’s popular theater—or to be severe, nude versions of travelling theater troupes—were what they were; spectators would typically throw money onto the stage, and fans would deliver sake and cigarettes to the dressing rooms. The following gives a sense for the actual conditions of the average *jitsuen*.

The pay for theater troupes with a headliner actress is good. For example, it’s said that Azuma Terumi’s troupe gets something like 400,000 yen a day. A regular Pink troupe probably takes home 100,000 yen, more or less. Four times that is not bad. In most cases, troupes travel with two men and two women. The pay for the men is between 10,000 and 15,000 yen a day. The actresses make 15,000 to 20,000 yen. If there is someone behind the scenes operating the tape recorder, that is a 5,000 yen expense. What remains goes to the director. Because he or she usually acts on the side, the take is not bad. They’ll take the stage three or four times a day, and six times on Saturdays. If they eat and do laundry in between, then they’ll also clean up their lives by visiting a nearby cafe. For the popular Kubo (Shinji) Troupe, this kind of down time gets used by performing at a different theater. In other words, they do both at once.³⁶

If you read general histories of the Pink Film, most books and timelines say *jitsuen* starts around 1968, and gets firmly established in 1969.³⁷ And the first time *jitsuen* in the Pink Film takes the form of the *rensageki* was with Seki Koji, a pioneer of the Pinks. Aside from the general histories, Seki also provides the following testimony: “I was the first to stage a *rensageki*, where the film would stop and actors would perform the story live. This was the pre-

cursor of the *jitsuen* by today's troupes like those of Tani Naomi and Ran Kōju."³⁸

The first film Seki Koji produced as *rensageki* was *Woman of the Secret Club* (*Himitsu kurabu no onna*, 1970). Pink Film specialty magazines have favorable reviews of these performances in Shizuoka and Numazu, and there are also articles about performances in Tokyo.³⁹ If you look at the advertisement for Seki Koji's *Inn of Snakes* (*Jain no yakata*, 1970), the copy dances on the page: "Planet of unconventional cinema and 3-dimensional *jitsuen*! One more thing was born!!" "A *Revsageki* Decisively Charging Hard—*Inn of Snakes* is the First!" "Seki Koji Releases an Ultra-Jumbo Version!!" "A Naked Beauty..Va-va-voom! Boing! Right at the Audience!!" and "Live and Actual Performance, Receiving Praise and Good Reviews."⁴⁰

Probably, the *rensageki* created by Seki Koji flavored the "film and *jitsuen*" style of the popular Pink Film with the style of the silent era *rensageki*. In actuality, there had already been a mix of *jitsuen* and film projection in Pink movie theaters. However, we must raise an objection to the story that *jitsuen* started around 1968, as one finds in general histories. At the very least, a strip theater in Hamamatsu launched a *jitsuen* troupe called Red and Black (Aka to Kuro) featuring actors and actresses from the Pink Film, and this was in October 1965. Subsequently, they traveled around the country, performing at strip theaters and Pink specialty houses. There is an article that records them performing three times a day for an hour at Ikebukuro's Shinema Ririo in March 1966.⁴¹ As this attests, they were well-received and Shinema Ririo attached *jitsuen* by Gekidan "Red and Black" to film screenings. After that, Gekidan "Red and Black" played at other theaters. It seems they worked until mid-1968. Coincidentally, when Pink Films gave rise to Nikkatsu Roman Porno Shirakawa Kazuko—the number one star—got her start in this troupe. Then, in 1969 the style of "*jitsuen* and cinema" became popular.

However, what would be the difference between "*jitsuen*" and mere "attraction"—or for that matter "striptease" and "nude show"? Or to what degree may we really call this *rensageki*? The border lines are quite vague, so it is likewise impossible to set starting and ending points on the historical timeline. According to Matsushima Toshiyuki, who edited the film column for *Mainichi shinbun*, described the showing of a film from the dawn of Pink Film entitled, *Wild Laura* (*Yasei no Rara*, 1963): "At the end of the showing, the actress that played the female dancer heroine in the film appeared on stage

completely nude. She didn't dance, nor did she sing; she just moved right and left."⁴² If we were to call this attraction "*jitsuen*", then isn't it true that *jitsuen* in Pink Film theaters started at the very dawn of the Pink Film? In order to resolve this issue, the point raised by Kamiyama Akira is extremely interesting.

When you look at pre- and post-war film posters, handbills, and newspaper advertisements, notices for "*jitsuen*" attached to the screenings catch one's eye. Even in the Pink Film before the Nikkatsu Roman Porno, there were movie theaters that used "*jitsuen* attached" as a way of attracting audiences. I went to these any number of times, not for the movies but to see the unusual "*jitsuen*". What were these? They are unusually difficult to define. One cannot call these "*jitsuen*" kabuki, *shingeki*, *shinpa*, *shinkokugeki* or anything along these lines. They aren't like films of the *rensageki* era, nor the "attractions" where singers come out to sing between films. It's unclear when they first appeared, but according to Yano Sei-ichi⁴³ the three-hour system of the film business was established in 1938 and because the number of films shown was restricted they added "*jitsuen*" as a last resort. At the same time, there was a business practice before this that combined cinema and "*jitsuen*". Anyway, "theater" that does not connect to the memory of movies cannot be called *jitsuen*; on the other hand, if *jitsuen* is alone without a movie they still called it *jitsuen* instead of "theater" to engage people's memory of the movies and exploit its advertising value.⁴⁴

Even in the case of Pink Film, if film and film performance were combined the strip portion could be taken whole and performed in small theaters in the countryside. So they could be doing two kinds of work simultaneously. The "*jitsuen*" within "film and *jitsuen*" has so many varieties the definition is truly ambiguous.

However, it is commonly thought that *jitsuen* became difficult to see in Tokyo in around 1973. However, *jitsuen* continued in the rural areas in Pink specialty theaters and strip clubs, thanks to traveling performers. Put another way, from around 1973 it became a rural phenomenon. Tani Naomi, the big star of Pink and then Nikkatsu Roman Porno, treated the Teatoru Kibo in

若さ爆発!!ポインの女王谷ナオミ初来演
 新春特別超豪華番組

ズバリ!楽しめる映画は成人向

セツクス占い

女高生と禁売春の群

婦人科秘物語

性相学入門

オールナイトのみ 成人向ご入場できません

明2日・3日は深夜興行



ナオミ劇団
中部地区初出演実現

実演

歓喜の合掌

★出演★
谷ナオミ / 神野ラーシ

青山美沙 / 山本昌平

情炎 肉のよろこび.....

本格的婦人行にキメラのメスをへれた
樹梨の問題作! 香みどり
自伝的作 野村浩将
野村浩将

ポインの女王
谷ナオミ主演
監督・北川セツ

(総天然色)
(天然色)

(1) 12:05 (2) 11:20
(3) 4:05 (4) 3:10
(5) 8:05 (6) 7:00
(7) 10:50

元旦より
大封切

●成人映画の
テアトル希望

名駅新・豊田ビルうらTEI541・3044

元旦より→四日市ぼたん 8日より→テアトル岐阜

Figure 11: Advertisement from Teatoru Kibo.

Nagoya as her second home. Until her retirement from the screen in 1979, she came to Nagoya to perform every year. I also remember seeing a handbill around 1980 advertising a *jitsuen* at a Nagoya strip theater by a theater troupe formed by a Pink Film actress. Even today, Pink actresses head theater troupes, although their numbers are small. They go around rural strip clubs, continuing the tradition of travelling troupes of *jitsuen*. Yamamoto Shinya's regular, Kubo Shinji, leads his own traveling troupe, and wrote the following in 1978:

The strip theaters in the Tokyo and Osaka regions say, "It's a *jitsuen* boom!" Even yesterday, the place in Osaka where my theater troupe Hosekiza performed had something like eight groups. Each one said, "Nikkatsu Porno Star Comes to Perform!"⁴⁵

Next there is also the testimony of Minato Yuichi, an actor that took the nickname "Rapeman" and cannot be overlooked for his activities in the late 1970s. He organized his own theater troupe, taking it around the country:

Theater? Most were strip theaters, you know? So even among fans there were those who found it tough to enter the theater. You know them immediately because they'd wander around outside the theater. We performed three times a day. Saturdays ran all night, so I guess there'd be five performances. It was *incredibly* hard work. So at one club (theater) we would stay for about ten days...we were asked, won't you come to Tokyo? ...nope, we really don't get a response from Tokyo audiences. They're cold. Compared to them, the way rural audiences obediently express their emotions is kind of scary.⁴⁶

Other examples are based in Osaka. From 1983, ENK Promotion, which produced gay Pink Films, ran a specialized theater for gay Pink in Osaka. Even today, they will have male strip shows between the movies several times a year.⁴⁷ In the Tokyo suburbs, there is a gay Pink theater called the Ko'onza, and it is also holding male strip shows. They are advertising this on an Internet homepage, so it would be good to confirm. Still, one may ask whether it is appropriate to call this "film and *jitsuen*" or not.



In the examples above, the main event was always the movie and *jitsuen* were only a bonus; however, there was also the opposite pattern. In other words, the *jitsuen* was main and the film was a freebie. The main performance would involve a show, theater, followed by a song show; the film was secondary. There are countless examples of this, but allow me to introduce one particularly important instance that few people know about.

In 1952, playwright Maruo Choken was commissioned by Kobayashi Ichizo, the founder of Toho, to create a “show for adults with high-quality eroticism that even women would watch.” With this he would establish the Nichigeki Music Hall, using the Moulin Rouge as his model. Maruo had emerged from the script section of the Takarazuka Revue. Just as Takarazuka regularly popularized songs and dances, the Nichigeki Music Hall succeeded by developing a theater troupe that would have actresses performing plays topless and thus garner the support of the highbrow intelligentsia. Hakukawa Masumi, who played the lead in Imamura Shohei’s *Intentions of Murder* (*Akai satsui*, 1964), was a lead actress there. Many famous comedians got their start in the stories between the dance numbers and plays.

Starting around 1972, they regularly commissioned work from various prominent figures in the culture world. A short list would have to include Teshigawara Hiroshi, Takabayashi Yoichi, Shindo Kaneto, Takechi Tetsuji, Yamaguchi Sei’ichiro, Terayama Shuji, Ishihara Shintaro, Kanze Hideo, Fukuda Yoshiyuki, Sato Makoto and others. It is a dazzling list of names. In Takechi Tetsuji’s period drama, he had women performing *barakiri*, which became quite a phenomenon among fans.⁴⁸ Directors used their favorite muses in quite interesting combinations—Yamaguchi Sei’ichiro, who fought the Roman Porno trials, used Tanaka Mari;⁴⁹ if Teshigawara Hiroshi was directing, he’d use Nikkatsu Roman Porno actress Ogawa Asami.⁵⁰ Of course, the ever popular Hara Etsuko also appeared in 1979, setting a new box office record.⁵¹

Finally, at the Happening Tokyo 69 (Hapuningu TOKYO 69, directed by Oka Satoshi), a movie called a “Lavender Film” was shown between shows and became quite a phenomenon. Lavender Films were not gay films. Movies

that showed actual sex and thus illegal were called “Blue Films” and were projected underground. Pink Films were adult films produced by professional independent film companies. The short films projected between programs never passed Eirin’s censorship, so they were closer to “Blue” than “Pink.” Thus, they mixed the two colors and came up with the name “Lavender.” One title was *Love (L’amour) (Ai [Ramuru])*, a two-part, 16mm, silent, black and white film five minutes in length. Meant to connect different parts of the show, it featured dancer Mai Etsuko and her partner Maro Keichi. They acted in Part I: Boy and Girl High School Students in the Early Showa Period and Part II: Boy and Girl High School Students in the Showa Era. You could probably call this a form of *rensageki* as well. Even though the boy rapes the female student in the first part, in the present-day setting of Part II his similar attempt is interrupted before the end in a kind of social satire.

It was commissioned by the directing department of Nichigeki Music Hall. Oka Satoshi was in charge of the show overall. What surprises are the names attached to the film. Supervisors included Oshima Nagisa, Wakamatsu Koji, Shinoda Masahiro among others, and the 16mm camerawork was by Adachi Masao.⁵²

I was able to find out more about these days from Adachi.⁵³ According to him, Oka Satoshi was a regular at Capricorn, a bar that served as home base for Adachi and Oshima Nagisa and. One day, Oka commissioned Wakamatsu, who was sitting in the seat next to him, to make this film. On the spot, Wakamatsu nominated Adachi to be the cameraman, simply because he was also in the bar. Of all the regulars at the bar, Adachi was the youngest and Wakamatsu explained that it would be fine because Adachi had handled 16mm at the Nihon University film club. According to Adachi’s memory, they shot in a forest in Tama Hills, even though it was only for a five minute film. Because it was an extravagant shoot and the final product would not be submitted to Eirin inspection, they were able to shoot a major sex scene. According to Eirin’s rules at the time, it was forbidden to shoot a man and a woman touching below the waist without underclothes on. This film ignored that taboo and shot that kind of scene. Lead actress Mai Etsuko had been the cover girl of the erotic late night TV show *11PM*, so she was quite slender. Adachi remembers looking through the viewfinder thinking she was too voluptuous for a high school student, that it would be too gaudy. In any case, the show was a huge hit. However, the Nichigeki Music Hall closed

its doors in 1984 when the building it inhabited was torn down. Today the site hosts a complex with department stores and the Yurakucho Marion movie theater.

In this way, from the late 1960s to the beginning of the 1970s, “cinema and *jitsuen*” naturally cohabited, and not simply in the Pink world. It was a popular phenomenon and not restricted to cinema; it was the fruit of an era of happenings, performance, and the avant-garde. To learn more about the conditions of those days, one should watch films like Oshima Nagisa’s *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief* (*Shinjuku dorobo nikki*, 1969), Hani Susumu’s *The Inferno of First Love* (*Hatsukoi: Jigokuben*, 1968), or Matsumoto Toshio’s *Funeral Parade of Roses* (*Bara no soretsu*, 1969).



The end of the 1970s was also the end of my mediocre teen years, when all I did was watch movies. Entering the 1980s, consumer video came to the home and the popularity of adult video led Nikkatsu to cancel the production of Roman Porno in 1988. Both cinema and the conditions for their production changed drastically. ATG became a springboard for launching Pink directors with talent into the mainstream cinema. Even so, it should be surprising that a tiny amount of Pink production continues today. As young people continue to peel away from cinema, the conditions enclosing filmmaking—production, distribution, criticism—become increasingly grim. Within these conditions, I continue to watch Pink Films in gloomy and dirty specialty Pink theaters, straining to hear over the white noise of ancient air conditioners and the snoring of the homeless and salarymen sneaking away from work. I sit in those grimy seats, assaulted by complicated feelings.

Translated by Abé Mark Nornes

NOTES

¹ For example, see “‘Pinku-kai no Yae-chan’ no aidorudo,” 48-52.

² “Aidoru nanba 1 ni natta poruno joyu,” 44-47.

³ “1979-nen daigakusai no joo wa...,” 15.

⁴ “Wakamatsu Koji no sekai,” 19-21.

⁵ “Pinku eiga no nyberubagu,” 44.

⁶ In 1975, Tokyo Koei, Nihon Eiga, Aoi Eiga, Kokuei, and Shintocho combined to make the Shintocho chain.

⁷ For the 1970s Pink Films distributed through Nikkatsu, they often appended a subtitle, typically “documentary porno” (*dokyumento poruno*) or Semi-documentary (*semidokyumento*). If you extract a very small number of exceptional films, this is basically a pack of lies. These kinds of films make no attempt to “document,” neither do they have a “documentary touch.” They are no different than any other fictional Pink Films.

⁸ Saito, *Nikkatsu poruno saiban*, 109.

⁹ Saito, *Kenryoku wa waisetsu o shitto suru*, 176.

¹⁰ For more information, see *ibid.*, 162-165.

¹¹ For example, see the gravure included in “Kimi wa Shina o Mita ka!” and “Pinku Eiga no Gesakusha.”

¹² “*Onmayu onnayu onnayu*,” 6.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁵ “Tanin ga Nanto Io Uchi Poruno Eiga ga Tsuzuku Gagiri Yarimasu,” 42-43.

¹⁶ “Kahanshin de Shobu Suru Sugoi Yatsu,” gravure.

¹⁷ Yamamoto, *Watasbi wa chikan*, 28.

¹⁸ “Donshu no dokiddoki daihoso,” 41.

¹⁹ Suzuki, *Pinku eiga suikoden*, 107-108.

²⁰ Minami Ranbo’s stage name was based on the name of the French Poet Arthur Rimbaud. At the same time, his lyrics have none of the complexity of Rimbaud’s poetry, and are actually quite lyrical. He had a huge hit in 1976 with the children’s song, “Yamaguchi-san chino Tsutomu-kun.” It was sold on the same album in 1977 with “En Route.” The very same year, Yamaguchi Junichiro shot *Kitamura Tokoku: Song for Our Winter* (*Kitamura Tokoku: Waga fuyu no uta*, 1977), which starred Kitamura Tokoku. Nakamura Genji’s fine *Female Devil* (*Nyobanma*, 1977) also used a Minami Ranbo song effectively.

²¹ “Nakamura Genji no sekai,” 35-36.

²² Murai, *Hadaka no yume nendaiki*, 243.

THOUGHTS ON THE EXTREMELY PRIVATE PINK FILM

- ²³ Coinced by Yoshihiro Tatsumi, *gekiga* are a form of *manga* that emerged in the late 1950s when the initial wave of postwar *manga* fans came of age. No longer satisfied with adolescent cartoons, they explored adult themes like sex and violence.
- ²⁴ Miyaya Kazuhiko was active for an unusually short time, from the late 1960s until the 1970s. Despite having a few masterpieces that have never been published in book form, his *gekiga* were fresh in terms of both content and style and he influenced many young people. For example, essayist Yomota Inuhiko writes extensively about Miyaya in his autobiography about his high schools days (Yomota, *Haisukuru* 1968). However, Miyaya himself had a destructive personality and distanced himself from commercialism. Today he has basically renounced the world. ATG and Directors Company produced an adaptation of one of his films, *Mermaid Legend* (dir. Ikeda Toshiharu, *Ningyo densetsu*, 1984). However, among Miyaya's works, this is one of the lightest and most commercial.
- ²⁵ "Yarareta onna," 9.
- ²⁶ This is according to the contribution from Sasaki Mikinori, a former staff member of Wakamatsu productions. Sasaki Mikinori. "Yoshimine Koji-kun no koto," 71.
- ²⁷ This is a filmmaking collective created by five people: Mizutani Toshiyuki, Isomura Itsumichi, Fukuoka Yoshio, Suo Masayuki, and Yoneda Akira.
- ²⁸ "Eiga—Okotaeshimasu," 198.
- ²⁹ "Hageshii aibu," 3.
- ³⁰ The data is from "Zenkoku eigakan meibo," *Eiga nenkan 1973-nendo*, 33-50, 93-102.
- ³¹ This is based on data from the "Zenkoku eigakan meibo" in Jiji Tsushin's *Eiga Nenkan* from 1953 to 1973.
- ³² *Tengu* is a legendary figure with a long, bulbous nose. Both *tengu* masks and *kakeshi* dolls look (and thus can function) like dildos.
- ³³ This was a form of mixed theater and film from the silent era. Troupes would typically perform plays, and then use short film sequences they had previously shot for scenes of exterior spectacle.
- ³⁴ As I pointed out before, Azuma Terumi made her debut at Nagoya's Teatoru Kibo as a member of Tani Naomi's troupe. However, she separated from the troupe, formed the Azumi Terumi Gekidan, and performed at the Hataba Gekijo and Teatoru Kibo in December 1975.
- ³⁵ "Azuma Terumi no Sutorippu Gakugeikai," 19.

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- ³⁶ Tsuda, *Za rokeshon*, 163-164.
- ³⁷ See, for example, *Hadaka no yume nendaiki*, 190; *Pinku riga suikoden*, 22.
- ³⁸ “Daitokushu: 78-nen pinku eiga natsu no jin no kofun,” 150.
- ³⁹ “Hyohan o yobu: ‘Rensageki’ to iu atarashii takumi,” 27.
- ⁴⁰ Advertisement, *Seijin eiga* 55 (August 1970): 3.
- ⁴¹ “Pinku joyu no butai shinshutsu,” 38-39.
- ⁴² Matsushima, *Nikkatsu roman poruno zenshi*, 110.
- ⁴³ Yano, *Onna kogyoshi Yoshimoto Sei*, 212.
- ⁴⁴ Kamiyama, “Ken o ubawareru jidaigeki,” 58.
- ⁴⁵ “Momoiro no yuwaku,” 46.
- ⁴⁶ “Minato Yuichi no satsuei genba senyu repoto,” 108.
- ⁴⁷ ENK stopped producing films in 2007.
- ⁴⁸ “‘Takeshi Oitari’ to kankyaku no koe,” 36. However, Takechi Tetsuji’s film got a lot of attention because of the scandals, but actually it was a stupid film.
- ⁴⁹ The program was actress Kanno Suga, the ringleader of an attempt to assassinate the Meiji Emperor.
- ⁵⁰ This program was a fantasy story set on a white sand beach.
- ⁵¹ This program had two stories, a period piece and a comedy based on a manga.
- ⁵² “Taishogai, sho no ichibu,” 6. Also “Wadai no ‘rabendaa firumu’ tojo,” 8.
- ⁵³ Interview with author (September 29, 2009).

THOUGHTS ON THE EXTREMELY PRIVATE PINK FILM

CATHER

Policing the Pinks

Kirsten Cather

The explosive rise of the Pinks and its successors accomplished many things for the domestic Japanese film industry at a critical moment in its history: at the time, they offered a route to solvency after theater visits plummeted in 1963 to less than half their all-time peak in 1958, when attendance reached over one billion visits;¹ and, in retrospect, they have been vindicated for offering a fertile training ground for debuting now famous directors, such as Kurosawa Kiyoshi and Sato Masayuki.² At the time, this low-budget low-brow genre of softcore erotic films did little, however, for the perceived legitimacy of Japanese film. For many, the emergence and increasing success of these films in the 1960s threatened the hard-earned reputation of Japanese cinema from its 1950s “golden age.” In 1972 Donald Richie wrote: “the stultified [sexual] impulse has created some extraordinary works of art.... None of these, however, are found among eroductions.”³ In 1976, Sato Tadao lamented that “theaters had become like the dens of perverts (*chikan no si*)” repulsing respectable spectators.⁴

These pithy quotes from the respective deans of film criticism in the West and in Japan reflect the taint of illegitimacy that marked these films on both moral and artistic grounds. Although these provide irresistible sound-bites, it should be noted that both scholars also offered more nuanced assessments of these films, recognizing at the very least their economic necessity, if not their integrity.⁵ The aura of perceived illegitimacy surrounding these films was a double-edged sword that both of these critics fully recognized, albeit lamented. By luring spectators or, more accurately, one segment of the market, back to the increasingly empty theaters, the industry was, in a sense, saving itself at the same time that it was digging its own grave. As prurient spectators replaced respectable ones, lowbrow and low budget erotic films would edge out highbrow ones, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby the industry might salvage itself in the short run only to degrade itself and self-destruct in the long one.

The illegitimate aura surrounding these films then paradoxically spelled not only the potential ruin of the industry, but also its more immediate salvation. For the target audience, the allure of these films was precisely the promise of illegitimacy that was strategically cultivated by the studios. This presented yet another double-edged sword for the film industry, however, for it piqued not only the attention of the audience, but also that of the censors: both the government censor (the police and state prosecutors), as well as their self-appointed minions (regional and national PTA, women's, and youth associations), and the industry's self-regulatory organization Eirin. Ironically, however, in censoring and labeling these films either "obscene" (*waisetsu*), "harmful" (*yugai*), or "adult" (*seijin*) respectively, the censors themselves contributed to this aura at the same time they were intent on destroying it. In other words, this illegitimate allure was strategically created by the moguls intent on promoting the films and inadvertently abetted by the moralists intent on prohibiting them.

This essay considers how censorship influenced the evolution of the Pink Film, imbuing it with an enhanced aura of the taboo at the same time that it strove to tame it. By considering the censorship history of this genre, I aim to show how censorship was a factor in the formation of the Pink genre, helping to congeal and calcify it into a legible, marketable, and policeable body of works recognizable for audiences and censors alike. I will also suggest how the emergence of increasingly erotic films generated tension among society's moral watchdogs, the film industry, and its self-regulatory organization, Eirin, that also helped to clarify the role and scope of state and self-censorship of film in the postwar period.

In her 1989 study of hard-core pornographic films, Linda Williams criticizes Walter Kendrick's 1987 *The Secret Museum* in which he argues that the label of pornography was not created until objectionable works began being locked up in the "secret museum," where access was restricted to educated and elite men, and censored from the view of a mass audience that included women and the lower-classes. Williams objects to his criteria for defining the genre, warning of the risks of "claiming that the various attempts to censor pornography, whatever it is, *are* its history,"⁶ and attempts to rectify Kendrick's insufficient attention to the films themselves in her own work.

Discussing a genre in terms of its censorship history, as Williams points out, risks adopting the censors' own often vague and arbitrary criteria. But

because the majority of Pink Films no longer exist, the traces left in censorship accounts are often all that remains for piecing together a larger picture. And, as US Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's infamous (non-)definition of pornography nicely put it, "I know it when I see it" often *is* the definitional criteria used, at least by the censor. I argue that these censors were grappling with the very same questions as later scholars, just without the benefit of hindsight: What constituted a Pink Film? How did it differ from a mainstream non-Pink erotic film? What unique and not-so-unique problems did the Pinks present because of their mode of production, distribution, and reception? In this essay, I attempt not to offer a history of the films themselves, but rather to detail a history of their censorship to illuminate the constraints that Pink filmmakers were working both *against* and *with* to produce the Pinks.⁷ I hope to show how these evolving systems of regulation productively affected, and were in turn affected by, the evolution of Pink Films. Albeit an altogether too distant lens for capturing what a Pink Film is or is not, it nonetheless suggests how a genre could be formed, as well as de-formed, by censorship in the minds of moralists, moguls, and moviegoers alike.

Policing Sex in the Postwar—Who, What, and How?

How, then, did policing the Pinks help to produce the Pinks? To begin, we need first to ask how were sexual depictions in films regulated in the immediate postwar? What kinds of depictions were censored, how, and by whom? And how had this system evolved by the time of the emergence of the Pinks in the early 1960s? As we will see, the legal and extra-legal mechanisms that were in place for policing sexual representation in the immediate postwar conditioned both how the industry and state censors responded to the Pinks and also, how the Pinks responded to the policing.

Transitioning From Wartime to Occupation-Period Censorship

Just two months after Japan's defeat in WWII, Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP) officials swiftly dismantled prewar and wartime censorship mechanisms in mid-October 1945, including the 1939 Film Law (*Eiga-bo*).⁸ Criminal violations of either "Public Morals (Mores)" (*fuzoku*) or "Public Order" (*chian*) no longer existed. In theory, the Occupation promot-

ed free speech and banned censorship as per Article 21 of the new Constitution promulgated in November 1946 that unambiguously states: “All freedom of expression is guaranteed. No censorship shall be maintained.”⁹ In practice, however, as Kyoko Hirano’s and other scholars’ work has shown, film, as well as other media, were subject now instead to a two-pronged censorship apparatus established as early as August 1945 under the General Headquarters’s (GHQ) Information Dissemination Section of the US Armed Forces: the military censorship arm, Civil Censorship Division (CCD) and the civil propaganda arm, Civil Information and Education (CIE). These organizations quickly demonstrated, albeit as covertly and invisibly as possible, that although wartime censorship mechanisms were no longer in place, there was a new censor in town with a new agenda—to promote democracy among the Japanese.

In the case of films, this translated into a carrot-and-stick policy of promoting “democratic” films while banning “feudalistic” ones. As the lists of desired and prohibited subjects distributed to Japanese film companies by GHQ in September and November of 1945 indicated, the Occupation censors were seemingly unconcerned with sexual representations. Neither list contained a single item regarding sexual depiction. In some ways, CIE even promoted depictions of overt (if tamed) sexuality, in their infamous policy endorsing “kissing films” based on the dubious reasoning that it was less “sneaky” than hiding it, and even democratic.¹⁰

This is not to characterize the Occupation as advocating the unabashed liberation of sexual expression. One key exception was their strict prohibition on depictions of Occupation personnel consorting with Japanese prostitutes, in what one scholar has aptly called “the most systematically practiced distortion of postwar reflections of contemporary life.”¹¹ Moreover, when censoring individual films, the CIE censors strictly censored nudity and rape scenes so as not to “incite filmgoers to ‘morbid curiosity.’”¹² And, as one of the first two inspectors working for the self-regulatory agency Eirin when it was established under the aegis of Occupation officials in 1949 revealed in his memoirs, the Occupation did not, in fact, adopt an entirely hands-off policy toward all sexual representations. The only problematic lines of dialogue cut during the first six months of Eirin’s tenure, from June to December 1949, occurred during the bedroom scenes of three films.¹³

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In general, however, the Occupation authorities' comparable lack of attention to sexual representation was attested to by the statistics: compared to over a thousand cited violations of nation and society clauses during the period of 1949 until 1953, there were only 410 citations for morals occurring at the level of script check.¹⁴

In large part, GHQ's seemingly laissez-faire policy regarding depictions of sex (insofar as it did not taint the reputation of the Occupation soldiers) stemmed from a belief that Japanese law itself had a mechanism for regulating sexual depiction. As CIE and CCD officials repeatedly told the Japanese themselves, sexual depictions were the purview of Japanese law, not GHQ.¹⁵ Indeed, despite the postwar Constitution's unambiguous guarantee of freedom of expression in Article 21, even in the postwar, purveyors of sexual representations deemed "obscene" (*waisetsu*) are criminally prosecutable under the provisions of the operative 1880 Criminal Code (*Keiho*). Its obscenity clause (Article 175) deems that: "A person who distributes or sells an obscene writing, picture, or other object or who publicly displays the same, shall be punished with imprisonment at forced labor for not more than two years or a fine of not more than 5,000 yen or a minor fine. The same applies to a person who possesses the same for the purpose of sale."¹⁶ Under this law, if guilty, a work is banned, and defendants are subject to imprisonment and/or fines. In the postwar, and indeed even today, this clause remains virtually unchanged with the only substantial alteration being the raising of fines to account for inflation (the prewar fine of a mere 500 yen was increased tenfold in late 1947 to 5,000 yen, and to a whopping 250,000 yen in December 1948).

It is worth stressing here that the language of this law does not specify what constitutes obscenity per se, inciting a seemingly never-ending debate in both legal and laymen circles. The oft-repeated mischaracterization of this law when discussed in relation to visual arts like film and photography suggests that it dictated no pubic hairs could be shown, until the so-called "liberation of hair" (*hea no kaiki*) in the wake of the publication of Shinoyama Kishin's nude photographs of pop idols Higuchi Kanako, Miyazawa Rie, and Motoki Masahiro by Asahi Press in 1991. But, in fact, the legal term "obscenity" (*waisetsu*) here is even emptier than Judge Stewart's famous non-definition. Nonetheless, the retention of this obscenity clause and its repeated and successful invocation in the postwar to prosecute everything from translated and native Japanese literature to photography, film, and manga suggests an

enduring concern with policing sexual representation in practice.¹⁷ For the film industry, the organization that would be charged with the Sisyphean task of defining and enforcing limits on sexual representation in films after the departure of the Occupation officials during an era of increasing sexual liberation was Eirin. This self-regulatory, non-governmental organization still operates today in the very same office building in Ginza it has been since June of 1949.

Post-Occupation: Enter Eirin

From the start, Eirin was tightly affiliated with Occupation officials, which had a lasting influence on the organization. As Eirin's own commemorative history admits, "Although one can say that the original Eirin was established as an independent self-inspection organization for the Japanese film industry, CIE's power of influence in the early days was tremendous."¹⁸ As we will see below, over the years, who Eirin was most closely affiliated with invariably affected its policies; who Eirin was "in bed with" influenced how it policed the so-called bedroom scenes in films.

In 1948, with the end of the Occupation in sight, CIE urged the Japanese film industry to create a self-regulatory body that would eventually take over CIE's role. Eirin required GHQ approval for the initial set-up of the organization and its regulations, which involved three revisions before gaining CIE's consent, and for the first five to six months of Eirin's operation, CIE and CCD also inspected the films. According to one of Eirin's first inspectors, in its earliest days, CIE met daily with the Eirin inspectors at the CIE office in the Hattori building in Ginza for film inspections to train them how to review films.¹⁹ CCD remained involved in day-to-day operations checking pre-production synopses and scripts until the end of 1949 and CIE post-production censorship continued until the end of the Occupation in April 1952.²⁰

Despite the strong influence of Occupation officials on the early formation of Eirin, one thing Eirin did not inherit was their *laissez-faire* attitude toward sex. Instead, like its model, the 1930s Hollywood Motion Picture Production Code (or Hays Code), Eirin was intimately concerned with policing the social, moral, and ethical order of society. Its name—Eirin or "Film

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Ethics”—itself suggests the extent of this preoccupation. And as its mission statement stated in a clear echo of the Hays Code,²¹ Eirin strove to assert itself as the arbiter of morality for films:

As entertainment and art, films have a great influence both spiritually and morally on the lives of our citizens for which we feel responsible. For this reason, we have established ethics regulations for the production of films, and we will strive to prevent the production of films that will lower the moral standards of spectators. ... [F]ilms must aim at uplifting the moral outlook of spectators and must not disturb the maintenance of societal order....²²

The scope of Eirin’s initial June 1949 regulations encompassed eight diverse categories. Four of these demanded that filmmakers respect fundamental societal institutions of “Nations and Societies,” “Laws,” “Religions,” and “Educational Systems.” A fifth category more closely related to bodily depictions, called “Cruelty and Filth,” directed filmmakers to take care not to incite cruel or dirty feelings in spectators by sensationally treating the topics of capital punishment, torture, lynching, cruelty to women, children, or animals, human trafficking of women or children, surgical operations (including abortion), and disabled, sick, or injured people. Of the eight clauses in Eirin’s initial regulations, only two dealt specifically with morality and sexual depictions:

Section 5: “Mores (*fuṣoku*)”

- 1) Do not deal with obscene words, actions, clothes, lyrics, jokes, etc. even if only one segment of the audience would understand them.
- 2) Take enough care not to stimulate the base impulses of spectators when dealing with naked bodies, removal of clothing, exposure of bodies, dancing, and bedroom scenes.

Section 6: “Sex (*sei*)”

- 1) Take care not to defile the sanctity of marriage or the family when dealing with sex. Such depictions and representations should not stimulate the base impulses of spectators.

- 2) Don't endorse prostitution.
- 3) Don't depict acts based on sexual perversion or perverted sexual desires.
- 4) Sexual hygiene and sexual diseases shall not be used as material other than as necessary from a moral or scientific perspective.²³

Notwithstanding the relatively small proportion of specific regulations regarding sexual depictions in Eirin's initial regulations, at the time of its inception, Eirin was charged with the crucial job of policing sexual morality and even with obliterating obscenity from Japan's motion pictures. At the inaugural celebration, Eirin was explicitly championed for the fact that it could make the obscenity clause (Article 175) of the Criminal Code obsolete. Head of CIE Nugent proudly heralded the introduction of Eirin as a harbinger of its extinction: "If [the regulations] are followed faithfully, even Article 175—the only regulation that presently applies to films—will be, for all intents and purposes, useless."²⁴ As some claimed, Eirin regulations were nothing less than "*the* constitution for the Motion Pictures."²⁵ Indeed, the media at the time interpreted Eirin's function largely in terms of its function of purifying the industry of its immoral films: headlines in the days after Eirin's inauguration touted the "Purging Erotic-Grotesque (*ero-guro*) Films" (*Yomiuri*) and the "Expelling Sensational Films" (*Mainichi*).²⁶

Eirin, Caught Between a Rock and a Hard Place

As is clear from the above description of its early formation, the influences of GHQ and of the US Hays Code inevitably lingered on even after the Occupation period ended. What is equally important to point out, particularly for the ways it affected the later policing of the independent Pink Films, is Eirin's early close ties with major domestic film studios and with Eiren, the current-day Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan, Inc. (MPPAJ).²⁷ Executives from both had been instrumental in the creation of Eirin and in the initial staffing of its topmost ranks: it was started by executives from Shochiku, Daiei, and Toho; its committees were headed by top management from Eiren and by current and former studio presidents (such as Daiei president Nagata Masa'ichi, Shochiku founder and Eiren chair Otani

Takejiro, and Eiren Secretary-General Ikeda Yoshinobu, who was also a former Shochiku director). The four designated “representatives from outsiders to the film industry” on the 24-person Film Ethics Regulation Control Committee included members who were far from “outsiders” in any true sense of the word, including Toho executive Osawa Yoshio, Nikkatsu president Hori Kyusaku, and, again, Ikeda. Importantly, the management committee (Eirin Rinri Kitei Kanribu) was staffed with liaisons appointed by each of the major studios.²⁸ The Eirin “expert inspectors” (*senmon shinsain*) themselves were recommended by the Directors and Writers Guilds of Japan based on their “knowledge of film”;²⁹ the first two were former screenwriters Nagae Michitaro and Kobayashi Masaru, the screenwriter of the popular 1938 film *Chocolate and Soldiers* (*Chokoreto to heitai*, dir. Sato Keisuke, 1938). And perhaps, most importantly, in addition to the 10,000-yen per film inspection fees, Eirin was funded by the monthly 50,000-yen contributions from the Big 5 studios belonging to Eiren.

If the financial subsidies from the Big 5 suggest the vested interest of the major studios in sustaining the “self-regulatory” Eirin, the frequent collaboration between these two groups reveals the depths of their interpenetration. From the start, twice monthly meetings of the Film Ethics Regulation Control Committee were held to discuss the administrative organization of Eirin with 13 representatives including one each from the Big 5 studios, two each from the directors and writers guilds, one distribution company representative, and three representative so-called “outsiders.”³⁰ Three times a month, the results of inspections were reported to this committee headed by Otani and staffed with Eiren and Big 5 executives³¹ and, in the early first two years or so, were also attended by film company presidents and the principal creators (presumably directors and producers) as well.³² In these meetings, a list of possible inspection violations based on script checks conducted by the Eirin inspectors and reviewed by Ikeda was discussed in-depth.³³

Most crucial to the smooth workings of Eirin and the studios in its early days were those studio liaisons (or more literally, “collaborators,” *kyoryokuin*), who met weekly with Eirin to discuss regulations and violations. In fact, these liaisons began not in 1949 with the start of Eirin, but back in the Occupation period with the creation of liaison sections in studios “staffed by specialists accustomed to dealing with General Headquarters.”³⁴ Inspector Kobayashi credited the early success of Eirin to the “internal self-restraint

mechanism” offered by these liaisons.³⁵ In recognition of their crucial and time-consuming role, in January 1951, their ranks swelled, from one to two representatives allotted from each major studio.³⁶

But, as is clear from its initial set-up, it appeared that Eirin had taken the term “self-regulation” a bit too literally. Just five months after its inception, on November 28, 1949, out of the recognition that Eirin was susceptible to the charge that its management committee was overrun with representatives from the studios, all members resigned and the committee was reconstituted with Eiren chair Otani now at the head. But, soon thereafter, in a December 1950 Eiren meeting, realizing that now Eiren, rather than the studios, made up the bulk of the committee, Eirin resolved to reorganize once more. This time they appointed retired Toho president Watanabe Tetsuzo to replace Otani as the new head with a newly established vice president slot filled by Ikeda beginning in January 1951. Despite these relatively minor shifts of personnel, the rest of the organization remained essentially unchanged with a heavy proportion of representation from the Big 5 studios (Shochiku, Toho, Daiei, Shintohto, and Toei), which still had both a corporate representative and now two liaisons on the committee.³⁷

What was deemed Eirin’s altogether too cozy relationship with the studios would make it the target of repeated criticism and even calls for its dissolution in a succession of scandals that threatened the authority and the viability of the self-regulatory system in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. The charged topic of policing sexual morality, in particular, invited criticism from increasingly vocal and powerful prefectural and national youth organizations and mother’s groups, politicians, and the media. Before long, the daunting challenges of the task Eirin had undertaken became all too evident and it soon became obvious that Eirin’s early “good faith” policies were insufficient to cope with the inevitable challengers to the system. Initially, the organization had not even included an indicator of Eirin’s seal of approval on the films themselves until the 53rd film inspected by Eirin, Shochiku’s *The Bell-Ringing Soldier* (*Kane no naru hei*, dir. Sasaki Keisuke) released in November 1949. And, at first, Eirin had no mechanism for enforcement, appealing only to the “self-restraint” of distributors and exhibitors not to circulate films that failed to pass Eirin.³⁸

The smooth functioning of Eirin’s self-regulatory system fundamentally depended on the cooperation and compliance of producers, distributors, and

exhibitors with Eiren, Eirin, and the Big 5 studios standing to lose the most should the system fail. As Eirin inspector Kobayashi noted in 1956 in response to criticism that Eirin was still too closely affiliated with the major studios, the problem was that “if Eirin became too independent, then who would subsidize and pay for it? Who would cooperate?”³⁹ As many filmmakers, studios, and exhibitors rapidly recognized, being an “outsider” to that circle of influence—either voluntarily or involuntarily—and not having to cooperate presented its own perks, as well as its own problems. As we will see, those “outsiders” included mostly everyone at a different point in time: from the domestic producers and exhibitors of strip films and “birth control” films and the importers of foreign films in the early 1950s to the perennial “outsider” major domestic studio of Nikkatsu in the mid-1950s, and from the minor Pinks in the early 1960s to, once again, the major studios, who soon jumped on the Pink and porno bandwagon.

Eirin’s Early “Outsider” and “Insider” Challengers

Domestic Strip Films in 1950

The “strip films” (*sutorippu eiga*) or “nudie films” (*nudo geki eiga*) that followed in the wake of the establishment of the first strip halls in Tokyo in Fall 1949 offered a harbinger of the troubles Eirin would later encounter with both the independents and the majors since these films were hybrids produced by minor independent companies, but distributed by the majors in their theaters. Making regulation even more difficult was the fact that these films occasionally screened outside the mainstream distribution network, appearing as double features at strip halls in 1951.⁴⁰ The first “nudie film” to encounter Eirin’s objections was *The Blind Virgin* (*Hadaka ni natta otome-sama*), an October 1950 tie-up between a strip theater and the producer Fuji Film. The most notorious one that became known as a “nudie film with more scenes cut from it than those remaining,” after Eirin dictated 34 cuts at the level of script, was a film produced by the independent company Shueisha but screened at Toei theaters in October 1950 called *Ten Nights in Tokyo* (*Tokyo tenya*, dir. Numanami Isao). It sported the lengthy and misleading subtitle of *Tokyo Documentary, Postwar Period, Lady Chatterley’s Powers* (*Tokyo doku-*

mentarii, Après guerre, Chatarei fujin no seino). As some commentators noted, there was nothing documentary about it, and nor did it have anything to do with the novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* or its sensational obscenity trial just beginning in Japan.⁴¹

These independent strip films disturbed the mutually beneficial system that had evolved between the majors and Eirin. As Eirin employee Endo Tatsuo from 1956 through 1968 noted:

Many of the producers [of these strip films] were under the impression that Eirin would approve [strip films] with the dances and acts that appeared at strip clubs intact. When we requested their cooperation toward the mutually advantageous and official standards agreed upon with the liaisons of the “Big 5” studios (i.e. avoiding full nudity, covering up nipples and torsos), these producers were extremely annoyed. You can say that this marked the first occasion of the anguish Eirin felt in the face of outsider pressure.⁴²

Endo's comment suggestively reveals the extent to which those “liaisons” from the Big 5 were central to the smooth functioning of Eirin and the extent to which their absence in the case of the “outsider” (*autosaidaa*) independents, including the Pinks, would cause Eirin no end of “anguish”. At the same time, the very example of the strip films' hybrid minor/major production and distribution network suggests also the fuzzy line that existed between the “majors” and “independents” all along, a hybridity also characteristic of the Pinks.

Birth Control Films and Sex Encyclopedia Series (1950-1953)

Two other categories of films that early on raised the ire of the Eirin censors and the moral watchdogs were the “birth control films” (*basu kon eiga*) and the “sex encyclopedia” (*seiten*) films. Both had pretensions of being educational, but only the former was actually categorized as an “educational film,” and as such was not subject to Eirin inspections because these films were designed for screening in schools, not theaters.⁴³ But in 1950-51, over 20 such birth control films screened without repercussions at both national theaters and at strip clubs with one provocatively advertising precisely its

ability to skirt the censors: “Last minute screening! A film you can’t see at the movie theaters. A film that won’t be able to be screened a second time. Virtuous or erotic?”⁴⁴ A scandal ensued in 1952 after a theater in Shibuya screened a quadruple bill of such birth control pictures for 100 yen per person, calling it a “Sex Education Film Convention,” shortly thereafter leading the police to confiscate the films on suspicion of obscenity.⁴⁵ Clearly Eirin was powerless to regulate the not-so-fine line between “education” and “titillation”.

The only thing educational about “sex encyclopedia” films, on the other hand, was their titles. The first one—*Virgin’s Sex Encyclopedia* (*Otome no seiten*, dir. Oba Hideo)—released by Shochiku in March 1950 was a huge hit with audiences. A subsequent boom in such titles peaked in February 1953 when Daiei released *Teenage Sex Encyclopedia* (*Judai no seiten*, dir. Shima Koji) with salacious advertisements that made it and other *seiten* films the target of vocal criticism from the PTA. Again, however, when Eirin requested that the majors exercise “self-restraint” in releasing *seiten* titles, the majors acquiesced,⁴⁶ but not before Daiei released in rapid succession both a sequel (on May 27th) and a sequel to the sequel (on September 22nd), all starring Wakao Ayako. As was clear from this incident and subsequent ones, the major studios cooperated with the self-regulatory censor Eirin, but this cooperation was forthcoming only when presented with threats from the external censor—the police and their minions.

Imported Erotic Films (1949-54)

The early push against Eirin to liberate sexual expression came not just from domestic “independent” filmmakers, but international ones as well. As “outsiders” to both Eirin and Eiren, imported foreign film companies initially posed a challenge to Eirin that also parallels the later one issued by the Pinks. At its start, Eirin was not initially charged with inspecting imported films and the first foreign film inspected was not until September 1952 with the British film *The Third Man* (dir. Carol Reed, 1949).⁴⁷ Until as late as November 1956, Eirin was powerless to regulate imported films except by the distributor’s voluntary cooperation, which was reluctantly and sporadically given by European import companies, but adamantly refused by the Big 10 American studios belonging to the US Motion Picture Association of Ameri-

ca (MPAA), who balked, reasoning that the films had already been inspected under the Hays Code.⁴⁸

As Eirin inspector Kobayashi admitted when writing in 1955-56, Eirin's authority vis-à-vis imports was undermined not only by this procedural difference, but also by practical constraints. By the time Eirin got to inspect imported films (if at all), they inspected only the final film, not the script as well, and under rushed circumstances since Eirin lacked its own screening room and needed to wait for an opening at another company's screening facility. In addition, subtitles posed a practical difficulty since inspections were conducted after these had been burned onto the print; similarly, the titles of imports were inalterable because advertisements and posters had already been issued. One unintended consequence of this post-production censorship of imported films was to make Eirin's censorship of foreign films both more visible and less effective than its pre-production censorship of domestic films, which allowed for more seamless editing and greater invisibility.⁴⁹ The differences between the two processes simultaneously drew attention to the fact that Eirin had the responsibility to censor imported films and to its severely limited ability to do so when faced with uncooperative importers.

Eirin's inability to regulate imported films effectively caused its own tensions both with the domestic filmmakers who felt unfairly regulated and with the police. Japanese filmmakers strongly criticized Eirin's "double standard" whereby they strictly regulated domestic films, but were lenient with imported ones.⁵⁰ In practice, however, the appearance of more explicit imported pictures inevitably pushed the limits on sexual depictions in domestic films as well. Former Eirin inspector and Secretary-General Sakata, for example, noted how the appearance of comparably sensational bed scenes, breasts, and naked woman emerging from bath tubs in imported films caused confusion about the standards Eirin was using for domestic versus imported films both inside and outside the organization.⁵¹ In December 1953, the first all-nude scene in the postwar screen appeared in the French film *Caroline Cherie (Un caprice de Caroline chérie*, dir. Jean-Devauivre, 1953), in large part because Eirin's inspection was not conducted until opening day with cuts requested only after it had screened.⁵² In May 1954, the 1949 Danish film *We Want a Child! (Vi vil ha'et barn*, dir. Alice O'Fredericks and Lau Lauritzen) featuring a childbirth scene and the 1953 French film *Sins of the Borgias (Lucrece Borgia*, dir. Christian-Jaque) both screened ignoring Eirin directives, with the latter provocative-

ly advertising the film as “The naked body of M. [Martine] Carol—something that you won’t be able to see after this film.”⁵³

Such bold advertisements invited the government censor into the picture, culminating in an incident in spring 1955 that provoked the interference of the Police Public Safety Division. The French film *Queen Margot* (*La Reine Margot*, dir. Jean Dréville, 1954) about the 1572 St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre screened in March 1955 with what Eirin deemed insufficient deletions in one scene that included a rearview shot of the all-nude Jeanne Moreau, playing Queen Margot, entering the bedroom. When Eirin complained to the distributor (New Cinema Corporation, or NCC, Shingai’ei) that this scene was “excessively bold with the crack of her buttocks clearly visible,” the distributor refused to make any cuts and provocatively issued new advertisements of the film with a full nude photo of the heroine and the tagline: “‘Ummmm,’ groans the seductive all-nude body of lovelorn Queen Margo.”⁵⁴ After conferring with Eirin, the police raided the Tokyo Hibiya theaters to enforce the cuts, leading the import companies to launch an anti-Eirin campaign in the media.⁵⁵

By the mid-1950s, the fact that the system was far from perfect became clear in these many scandals involving “outsider” import companies. But, scandals also involved the domestic studios. Indeed, as first Eirin inspector Kobayashi admitted in late August of 1956, not only was the foreign industry not “fully participating,” but even domestic companies sometimes ignored Eirin and put nudie pictures out on road shows in rural areas. Kobayashi optimistically expressed his hope nonetheless that these uncooperative domestic studios would see the light, writing: “The film industry isn’t a callus. Once it realizes this, it won’t bite at its own foot.”⁵⁶ He even later suggested that the reason why Eirin did not initially build its own special screening room was based on the belief that Eirin’s ideals would eventually be so completely absorbed by the film industry that Eirin itself could be dissolved.⁵⁷ It would, however, take two high-profile scandals—one involving the “insider” domestic Big 5 studio Toei in 1954, and the other involving the “outsider” major studio Nikkatsu’s Sun Tribe (*taiyozoku*) films in 1956—to compulsorily bring the studios, distributors, and exhibitors of both imported and domestic films into the fold.

**The Pleasures (and Punishment) of Vice:
The 1954 Scandal and the Creation of “Harmful” “Adult” Films**

Throughout the 1950s, media in Japan increasingly came under the scrutiny of the government and its watchdogs, particularly any representations that might be deemed harmful to youths. In 1950, the Prime Minister’s office established the Central Youth Problem Investigative Committee (Chuo Seishonen Mondai Kyogi Kai), as well as regional “youth organizations” (Seishokyo) and subsequently also a Strategic Committee for Youth Culture (Seishonen Bunkazai Taisaku). Individual prefectures passed their own youth protection ordinances (*Seishonen hogo* [or *aigo*] *jorei*) that were first designed to regulate youths behaviors (curfews, drug use, etc.), but soon came to be used to regulate media consumed by youths by designating these “harmful” (*yugai*) and off-limits to those under 18.⁵⁸ In effect, this designation represented Japan’s first institution of a ratings system, one that was assigned not by the film industry, but instead by the state at the prefectural level and carried with it the authority to fine local theaters who flouted these regulations. And importantly, here, the ratings designation was far from neutral in its choice of term: “harmful.”

Just two months after the Prime Minister’s Office established its Strategic Committee on Films, Books, and Other Media Harmful to Youths (Seishonen ni Yugai naru Eiga Shuppanbutsu nado Taisaku Senmon Iinkai), in August 1954 Toei’s film *The Pleasures of Vice* (*Aku no tanoshisa*, dir. Chiba Yasuki), an adaptation of an Ishikawa Tatsuzo novel that had been serialized in *Yomiuri* newspaper, was the first to be designated a “harmful film.”⁵⁹ The film recounts the misdeeds of a dissolute male protagonist, including his sexual affairs with female coworkers and married women and his murder of a friend for money. Pointing to the ending, which concludes with the protagonist’s failed suicide attempt and a budding relationship with a sympathetic nurse, one commentator claimed the film emphasizes the flipside of the title—“the defeat of evil,” not its pleasures. The moralists, however, disagreed. After it screened, a movement to purge “vulgar films” (*zokuaku eiga*) swept the nation. Citing the Child Welfare Law, Nijjima prefecture’s Children’s Welfare Council protested to Eirin and Kagawa prefecture designated it “harmful” under its Child Protection Ordinances, barring anyone under 18 from seeing it. This measure was soon followed by many other prefectures. In August 1954, Eirin first responded by convening an Investigative Research Commit-

tee on Strategies for the Film and Youths Issue (Eiga to Seishonen Mondai Taisaku Kenkyu Kyogikai), but the movement only gained steam with the media joining the chorus, and, most importantly, the Central Youth Problem Investigative Committee issuing an appeal to Prime Minister Hatoyama on November 5th urging the creation of an “effective and appropriate legal measure” to deal with such films. What was clearly implied was that Eirin failed to satisfy this role.

In response to the scandal, Eirin instituted the industry’s first rating system to begin on the symbolically apt Children’s Day (May 5th) of 1955 with two categories: “films geared toward adults” (*seijin-muke*), who were defined as 18 and over, and others as “recommended” (*suisen*) for youths.⁶⁰ To designate these, Eirin established the Committee on Children’s Film Viewing (Seishonen Eiga Iinkai), which included members from outside of the film industry, such as child psychologists and mother’s organization representatives. Eirin would issue lists of these films to the relevant prefectural youth organizations and welfare councils, housewife and mother’s organizations, as well as the mass media. Distributors were to include the adult mark on advertising and theaters were obligated to hang a sign reading: “This week’s film is geared toward adults so we ask that those under 18 years of age refrain from watching it.”⁶¹

At the time of its institution in May 1955, a “film geared toward adults” was defined by this Committee as follows:

Among contemporary Japanese films are many created in order to satisfy as entertainment for adults. Among these, even if they are appropriate for the appreciation of adults from the perspective of Eirin regulations, there are also some works that are inappropriate for youths because of their immature bodies and minds. Therefore, films shall be labeled “geared toward adults” to indicate that it is desirable only for adults, those 18 and older, to view them if they:

- 1) entice spectators to anti-democratic thoughts and actions;
- 2) incite actions that violate public order and morals based on societal standards;
- 3) tolerate or praise violence;

- 4) impede the normal progression of sexual maturation;
- 5) stimulate in any other way that interferes with the nurturing of healthy human beings.⁶²

Although not as explicit as the prefecture's "harmful" label, here too the criteria for deeming a film "geared toward adults" was precisely based on the harm that it could cause vulnerable youths. In theory, the "adult" and "harmful" labels were quite distinct in terms of who bestowed them, but in practice, they meant the same thing: youths under 18 could not see them and an aura of the illicit surrounded them.⁶³ The slipperiness of these terms suggested not distinct categories, but instead a spectrum where labels of "adult" and "harmful", and later the criminal charge of "obscenity", blurred into one fuzzy continuum. In a sense, the prewar categories of "Public Order" and "Public Morals" were resurrected once more; sex and violence were again charged with threatening public order. Nowhere would this become more evident than in the subsequent Sun Tribe scandal.

The 1956 Sun Tribe Film Scandal: Exiling Eirin from "Industry Insider" to "Impartial Outsider"

After the July 1955 publication of the explosively popular and critically acclaimed novella *Season of the Sun* (*Taiyo no kisetsu*) by the previously unknown 24 year-old novelist Ishihara Shintaro, the adaptation of Sun Tribe novels into films was swift and scandalous. In 1956, three of Ishihara's works alone were released: on May 17th, *Season of the Sun* (*Taiyo no kisetsu*, dir. Furukawa Takumi, Nikkatsu), on June 28th, *Punishment Room* (*Shokei no beya*, dir. Ichikawa Kon, Daiei), and, on July 12th, the most notorious and critically acclaimed *Crazed Fruit* (*Kurutta kajitsu*, dir. Nakahira Ko, Nikkatsu).⁶⁴ The backlash against the films was equally swift.

Although all were categorized as "adult films", they depicted wayward Japanese youths, again raising the suspicion that youths would seek out the films and be corrupted. In May of 1956, rumors spread that youths returning from watching Sun Tribe films would sexually attack female passersby.⁶⁵ In Kyushu, during a screening of *Season of the Sun*, the police burst into a theater to check for underage spectators. On the eve before *Punishment Room* previewed, *Asahi* newspaper ran the headline: "Danger That It Will Incite Copy-

cat Crimes. If You Screen It, Cut It!” featuring a scathing critique of the studios and Eirin by film critic Izawa Jun. The day after it screened nationally, on June 29, 1956, the National Federation of Regional Women’s Organizations visited Eirin to demand that they “thoroughly enforce viewing restrictions of this film and rectify the lenient aspects of Eirin inspections.” When the Sun Tribe films continued unabated, mass media criticism of Eirin was relentless with headlines like “Eirin, What are You Doing?” “Ineffectual Eirin” and “Eirin’s Collusive Inspections.”⁶⁶ *Asahi* newspaper criticized Eirin as corrupted by the subsidies it received from the Big 5 studios and by its staffing with former screenwriters.⁶⁷

Again, only when the public scandal precipitated threats of the restitution of government censorship did Eirin develop a hasty and ultimately effective counter-strategy. In an August 13th meeting of the Youth Education and Culture Committee (Seishonen Kyoiku Bunka Shingikai), the Minister of Education lamented, “Despite the fact that Eirin was created to shut down delinquent films (*furyo eiga*), in their seven year tenure they’ve established no track record whatsoever”⁶⁸ and threatened to intervene by establishing an investigative committee to strengthen the laws “to purge delinquent films.” Just four days later, at an August 17th meeting among the studio presidents of the Big 5 companies and members of Eiren, the new and significantly restructured organization of Eirin was announced.

Most significant was the massive reorganization of the committee that had heretofore consisted only of industry people, especially from the Big 5 studios and Eiren, so that it would now include “people who have a general knowledge of films, and an understanding of societal education and international culture.”⁶⁹ The chief post of this new Eirin Commission of Councilors (Eirin Kanri Inkaï) was to be elected annually by the new Eirin-Sustaining Committee (Eirin Iji Inkaï), headed by Toei president Okawa Hiroshi and made up of representatives from 45 companies, including the six large feature film studios (the Big 5 and also Nikkatsu), seven domestic short feature film studios, and European and US import and distributors, even the heretofore reluctant major 10 U.S. studios. Replacing former Toho president Watanabe Tetsuzo as the chair of the Eirin Commission of Councilors was Takahashi Sei’ichiro, the former Minister of Education under Prime Minister Yoshida. Equally importantly, the monthly subsidies from the Big 5 studios were eliminated and Eirin was funded entirely inspection fees based on the

length of the films, which were raised approximately fourfold from 10,000 yen per film to 24 yen per meter.⁷⁰ The Committee on Children's Film Viewing was also upgraded from committee (*iinkai*) to a council (*shingikai*), which was now staffed with 13 members including high school principals, representatives from housewife, mother, and children's welfare organizations, and prosecutors and family judges.⁷¹

Although the charge that Eirin was merely a front for the film industry was mitigated by this massive reorganization, the issue was far from resolved. Now that the committee included members from outside the film industry, most notably former Minister of Education Takahashi, it merely invited the opposite charge, namely that Eirin was now a handmaiden of the government authorities. Seemingly in anticipation of such charges, Eirin had dropped the word "regulations" from its name and dubbed the former organization the "old Eirin" (*kyu Eirin*), but its inclusion of former government employees led some to dub it "*Amakudari no Eirin*,"⁷² a modifier that literally translates as "descent from heaven" to refer to the appointment of former government officials to private companies or organizations.

The Sun Tribe scandal effectively redrew the lines between "insider" and "outsider". At the same time that Eirin had now become more of an impartial "outsider" to the film industry, the industry itself, including recalcitrant major foreign studios and domestic ones like Nikkatsu, were forcibly transformed into "insiders" who were, at least ostensibly, united. On November 14, 1956, importers of European and US films officially became members of the Eirin-Sustaining Committee so that all foreign films were now subject to Eirin's inspection.⁷³ Distributors and theaters too were eventually brought into the fold with the establishment of The Japan Association of Theatre Owners (*Zenkoren* for short) in September 1957, which dictated that member theaters could not screen films without Eirin's seal of approval. This code was indirectly made into law with the passage of the Healthy Environment Law (*Kankyō eisei hō*) later that year that made violators subject to hefty fine systems established by local prefectural regulations, for example a 500,000-yen fine in Tokyo.⁷⁴ And Nikkatsu joined Eiren for the first time in January of 1958 (although they subsequently withdrew from the organization and are not currently members.) Ostensibly, the entire industry was united as one big happy family now, as symbolized by the inaugural ceremony for the

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“New Eirin” held, appropriately enough, at the Nikkatsu “Family Club” (*famirii kurabu*).⁷⁵

Regulating the Pinks

From the perspective of the independent Pinks, Eirin’s affiliation with either the major studios or with the government did not bode well for its own fate. The Pinks would later find themselves the target government censors, Eirin, and the major studios alike. Paradoxically, however, the reining in of the recalcitrant domestic and foreign majors also presented an economic opportunity for the outsider Pinks, as well as for those “insiders” who were willing to push the limits.

If uncooperative import and domestic film studios, and even the cooperative “majors” posed a challenge to Eirin from the moment of its inception, what about the self-proclaimed “outsiders” of the Pinks? By the time of the Pink explosion starting in 1962, Eirin had already developed a well-established pattern that had thus far effectively warded off threats from the self-appointed and state censors to reinstate governmental censorship. When outrage from moralists and the media peaked, and especially when it was followed by threats of governmental action, Eirin and the film industry rapidly responded by issuing official apologies, and announcing sometimes substantial, sometimes symbolic revisions to the inspection process and personnel of Eirin. The dilemma posed by the Pinks was, on the one hand, all too familiar. But the Pinks also posed somewhat new challenges for Eirin especially when the police and state prosecutors increasingly charged Eirin itself with not just failing in its self-proclaimed mission, but even in aiding and abetting the distribution of obscene films.

Pinpointing “Adult Films” in 1957-58

What defined a “Pink” film for the censoring authorities was not any distinction between major and minor studios, a distinction that, as Alex Zahlten and Roland Domenig have pointed out, is a false one particularly inaccurate

for describing the diversity of the genre in its formative days,⁷⁶ but rather the label of “adult film.”

By the time of the Pinks, Eirin’s adult film rating had changed from “films geared toward adults” to the more definitive “adult films” (*seijin eiga*) and the criteria had expanded considerably. Prompted by the boom of prostitution films in 1956, Eirin added an interpretive clause in January 1957 dictating that adult films would include any that “stimulated sexual feelings,” as well as those treating the red light district or the conquest of the opposite sex, even if individual scenes were not stimulating. In January 1958 along with the more definitive ratings name, Eirin’s newly established Investigative Committee for Adult Film Research (Seijin Eiga Kenkyu Inkaei) issued an interim report to Eirin Chair Takahashi to expand the definition of an adult film to include:

- 1) films with a protagonist who is an anti-societal individual, such as a criminal or *yakuza*;
- 2) films that deal with unnatural relations between a man and woman or loving another man’s wife;
- 3) films about prostitution;
- 4) and potentially films in which sex relations are dealt with comically or satirically.

In addition, Eirin advised that all films should avoid: depictions of drugs, rape and incest as much as possible, the sensational treatment of the “abnormal physiology of late teens,” films with “red-light district” (*yukaku*) in their titles, and disrespectful treatment of teachers.⁷⁷ Again, however, the ability to enforce these stricter regulations on the distribution side was particularly difficult because of the double and triple bill exhibition system, a problem that was corrected to a degree in April 1958 when Zenkoren began disallowing double features pairing adult films and children films.⁷⁸

New Eirin Regulations: August 10, 1959

On August 10, 1959, newly revised Eirin regulations were issued for the first time since Eirin’s inception ten years earlier and would be the official

regulations in place when the Pinks first emerged in the early 1960s. Although the Eirin Chair had issued a number of detailed instructions and memos over the years, this was the first systematic revision of the regulations. On the whole, not much changed of substance. The initial eight sub-categories (“Nation and Society”, “Law”, “Religion”, “Education”, “Mores”, “Sex”, and “Cruelty and Filth”) shrunk to five total, with “Cruelty and Filth” eliminated, “Law” renamed “Law and Justice”, and “Sex and Mores”, now constituting its own single category.

A telling change, however, was made to the preface: although the original line about aiming “to prevent the production of films that will *lower* the moral standards of spectators” was maintained almost verbatim (with the exception of replacing “moral” with “ethical”), the line that deemed “films must aim at *uplifting* the moral outlook of spectators” was omitted.⁷⁹ After the Sun Tribe debacle and with the escalation of sexual expression both internationally and domestically, Eirin seemingly recognizing that no longer was moral uplift the charge of films or Eirin, merely the prevention of further degradation.

The regulations listed under each category became increasingly detailed, seemingly in response to the innovative censorship-dodging strategies developed by filmmakers, with those for “Sex and Mores” swelling from six points total to six regulations and seven sub-regulations. The four items under the previous “Sex” category remained unchanged (items no. 1-4 in the new regulations), but the formerly vague injunction not “to stimulate the base impulses of spectators” was expanded considerably:

Section 6 “Sex and Mores” (*Sei oyobi fu:zokun*):

- 1) Take care not to defile the sanctity of marriage or the family with the treatment of sexual relations.
- 2) Don’t endorse prostitution.
- 3) Don’t depict acts based on sexual perversion or perverted sexual desires. No endorsement of prostitution.
- 4) Sexual hygiene and sexual diseases shall not be used as material other than as necessary from a moral or scientific perspective.

5) Sexual acts and sex crimes (i.e. incest) must be treated with care, especially the following categories: a. In depictions of bedroom scenes and rape, take enough care to ensure that spectator's base passions are not stimulated. b. Do not deal with obscene words, actions, clothes, lyrics, jokes, etc. And be very careful with suggesting those things.

6) Avoid depictions of customs that are commonly accepted to be reviled or vulgar depictions that will incite the hatred of spectators. In particular, take care with the following categories: a) naked bodies, removing clothing, exposing the body, and dances based on these; b) full nudity; c) mixed bathing; d) genitalia; e) acts of excretion.⁸⁰

In addition, there existed a separate memo (also dated August 10, 1959) that detailed the committee's consensus about how to apply these new regulations:

- 1) No depiction of genitalia or pubic hair.
- 2) Avoid full shots of completely naked bodies that show the sex act.
- 3) Avoid any pumping motion that includes lower bodies.
- 4) No depiction of things clearly associated with clear ejaculation.
- 5) Avoid persistent genital petting (including, for example, fellatio and hand entanglements either inside or on top of underwear).
- 6) As much as possible, avoid repetitive dialogue, groans, etc. during orgasm.⁸¹

Prosecuting the Pinks: The "First" Pink Scandals in 1962-63

For the "lowest budget" Pinks whose only "weapon" (*buki*) was sex and nudity, as one commentator noted,⁸² these tightened regulations meant in-

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evitable run-ins with both Eirin and the police. But they also spelled a new level of tension and conflict between the police and Eirin. In the early to mid-1960s, with the explosion of Pink Films on the market, the police's Public Safety Division repeatedly challenged Eirin's authority by threatening to initiate obscenity charges against Pink Films even if they had passed Eirin. The tension between Eirin and the police and prosecutors would culminate in two high-profile obscenity trials: the unprecedented trial of the director and distributor of a film that had passed Eirin—Takechi Tetsuji's 1965 *Black Snow* (*Kuroi yuki*)—and the subsequent Nikkatsu Roman Porno trial (1972-80) in which Eirin inspectors were tried alongside the directors and studio executives.

Market of Flesh (1962)

The tension caused by the Pinks was, in fact, evident from the appearance of the so-called “first” Pink Film, *Market of Flesh* (*Nikutai ichiba*) in March 1962, directed by Kobayashi Satoru, a former Shintocho director, produced by the short-lived Kyoritsu Films and distributed by Okura Films. As with other ostensibly “ordinary” texts, this designation is highly debatable, particularly since the term itself was not coined until the following year by journalist Murai Minoru after Kokuei screened the film *Lust Cave* (*Joyoku no dokutsu*) in October 1963.⁸³ As the “first” Pink and the “first” to invite police interference on suspicion of violating Article 175, the speedy targeting of the film suggestively seems nevertheless to support Eirin's claim that the police had presciently “marked” the film as a lesson to both independent filmmakers and to Eirin.⁸⁴

Like the Sun Tribe films, this film too was about a gang of wayward youths, but this time not the upper-class vacationers at the Kamakura seaside, but instead hard-scrabbled youths from the city streets of Roppongi. Its combination of sex, violence, and youths similarly provoked the ire of the censors because despite its adult film rating, its subject matter involved youths and was, in fact, based on a real-life gang in Roppongi much in the news at the time. Most notably, it featured a torture scene with a glinting knife poised to pierce a young woman's nipple once the candle placed on her boyfriend's stomach had burned through the rope to which it was tied.⁸⁵ In addition to labeling it an adult film, “out of fear that it would invite misun-



Figure 12: *Market of Flesh*.

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derstanding among youth spectators even though it depicted the impulsive actions of youths critically,” during the preview final print inspection, Eirin called for multiple revisions and cuts of its frank depictions of nudity and rape.⁸⁶

But just a week after the film screened at four Tokyo theaters and became a huge hit, police quickly busted the film as a potential violation of Article 175 on March 15th and visited Kyoritsu Production Company offices demanding seven additional cuts of the film’s sex and violence, to which they acquiesced, forestalling an official indictment.⁸⁷ Eirin, however, was not so inclined to let it go at that. In response to the police’s threat, Eirin visited the police on March 19th to lodge a protest. In addition to denying that the film was obscene, Eirin president Takahashi sent a letter to the Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan police criticizing the police’s failure to consult Eirin first, noting the threat of charges “contradicts their previous attitude of respect for the self-regulation by Eirin.”⁸⁸ Although Eirin and the police (including members from the Crime Prevention, Public Safety, Youth and Mores divisions formed a discussion group in June 1962 to resolve these issues.⁸⁹ Soon enough tensions resurfaced once again in the first successful prosecution of a Pink.

Sexy Route 63 (1963)

In May 1963, the police again busted a Pink Film that had passed Eirin. While the film *Sexy Route 63* (dir. Saijo Kenji) distributed by Kokuei was screening at independent theater chains, the police seized the prints and conducted a forcible search of Kokuei offices. Eirin again publicly condemned the police’s methods of disrespecting Eirin’s authority, calling together a public meeting with the Prevention of Crime section of the metropolitan police, but this time found themselves on less solid grounds for defense. Although the film had initially passed Eirin, the film screening in the theater was an edited version with scenes of nudity added after Eirin’s inspection.⁹⁰ A Tokyo district court subsequently convicted “the rogue company (*furyo gyosha*) for publicly exhibiting a film comprised of clips of film scenes that had been passed by Eirin along with those that had not as if it were a film made up entirely of scenes that had passed Eirin’s inspection.”⁹¹

Notwithstanding the fact that Kokuei had flouted Eirin's regulations, Eirin recognized that this incident represented a serious threat to its authority by the state, marking the first occasion in which the police and prosecutors chose to criminally charge a film even though they believed it had passed Eirin. Ignoring Eirin's protestations about the police's methods, the police chief in charge of Public Safety and Mores stated: "We respect Eirin's inspections, but we will conduct regulations of irresponsible films like this one from an independent standpoint."⁹² Although Eirin strove to maintain its role as a "buffer zone" between the state authorities and the film industry, as this and subsequent incidents would illustrate, Eirin's inability to reign in the renegade "outsider" Pinks paradoxically lessened its authority over the film industry in practice, while at the same time, led to its being charged by the police as criminally responsible for distributing obscenity alongside the film industry.

The Particular and (not so Particular) Problems of the Pinks

What made the "irresponsible" Pinks so intransigent to Eirin's self-regulation and ultimately made both organizations the target of police and state prosecutors? Since Pinks needed the Eirin mark to distribute their films in mainstream theaters belonging to Zenkoren, they were compelled to undergo Eirin inspections. But, like Nikkatsu, a major studio whose affiliation with Eirin and fidelity to their regulations remained tenuous even after the Sun Tribe scandal and their joining of Eirin and Eiren,⁹³ these independent Pink producers initially also lacked any connection with either organization, which meant that they too need not be as faithful to Eirin regulations as the Big 5 studios.

Practical Problems of Policing the Pinks

Eirin's difficulty policing the Pinks (or, more accurately, all "adult films") was perhaps most importantly a factor of sheer numbers. In 1958, only 24 (19 domestic, five imports) of the 626 feature films checked by Eirin warranted adult ratings whereas by 1963, the number reached 62 (37 domestic,

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25 imports) of 640 total, and by 1964 had escalated to 120 (98 domestic, 22 imports) of 615 total. By 1965, the number reached a whopping 245 (233 domestic, 12 imports) of 772 total and in 1973 the all-time peak of 363 (295 domestic, 68 imports) adult features out of 618 total.⁹⁴ In terms of percentages, adult films skyrocketed from just 3.8% in 1958 to 58.7% in 1973, and by 1966, 900 of the 4,600 theaters nationwide were screening Pinks weekly.⁹⁵

In large part, these numbers posed a problem because of practical limitations on Eirin's manpower. The need for more inspectors than the originally appointed two was obvious as early as November 1949 with Sakata Ei'ichi added to the staff, and another, Takei Shohei, in September of 1950. As of September 1952, the number had grown to five.⁹⁶ According to inspector Kobayashi, even before the emergence of the Pinks, Eirin was woefully understaffed. As of November 1957, he claimed there were six inspectors and seven office staff covering 600-plus films a year but to keep up they needed ten inspectors and 30 staff members and also, crucially, their own inspection facilities.⁹⁷ And even back in 1955-56, Kobayashi admitted that for domestic films, it was often impossible to preview the rush print. And, in practice, limited personnel and rapid turnaround times for films that were slotted for pre-arranged release dates even meant that films sometimes screened publicly without the Eirin seal of approval,⁹⁸ even well before the explosive emergence of the Pinks with their rapid turnaround times in 1962-63.

Because of their explicit content, inspections of adult films were both time-consuming and costly, representing a disproportionate financial burden on the organization. Eirin charged for inspections based on meter length, but since Pink Films were designed to screen on a double or triple bill, they were relatively short. Donald Richie estimated the length of a Pink Film in 1966 to be only about 1,981 meters (6,500 feet), and the "first" Pink *Market of Flesh* was only 1,350 meters (4,429 feet).⁹⁹ Adding to the cost burden, the small independent companies were charged the same amount per meter as the majors but often could not afford to prepay, often going bankrupt before making payment to Eirin.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, an average of 300 meters were cut from Pink Films after Eirin's inspections, but since Eirin fees were based on the length of the final film, not submitted footage, the labor involved in censoring a Pink Film was not factored into the costs. To mitigate this, one inspector, Sakata Ei'ichi, proposed having fees depend not on the eventual length of film, but instead on submitted footage, but other Eirin employees rejected

this suggestion because it might encourage undue cutting.¹⁰¹ Recognizing the disproportionate burden of the Pinks on Eirin, the majors even petitioned to have them excluded from Eirin inspections in June 1965, although this too was ultimately unsuccessful.¹⁰²

With the Pinks, these practical problems were not created anew, but exacerbated. Similar to the time pressure faced when inspecting imported films, the rapid turnaround times for producing Pink Films made Eirin's difficult job nearly impossible. Soundtracks were not added until after shooting, so only the final print could be checked for objectionable dialogue and sounds. Moreover, because independent studios (and Eirin) lacked their own screening facilities, inspection screenings of Pink Films were held at Meguro or Okubo studios with limited screening times.¹⁰³ Not only did arranging for a special screening for Eirin impose a financial burden on the small production companies,¹⁰⁴ but limited screening times also often meant that the final film screening became the default, without a preview of the rush prints, as was the case with *Market of Flesh*.

In contrast, majors underwent a three-stage inspection process whereby Eirin checked script, rush print, and final print under ideal circumstances (although, as we saw above, this was not always possible in practice). According to Kobayashi, thorough script checks ensured that very rarely did a film require additional revisions at the level of completed print, with the rare exception of occasional action scenes, or an actor's exaggerated facial expressions.¹⁰⁵ In addition, Big 5 film companies often voluntarily submitted synopses even prior to the script check when they were starting on potentially controversial projects to get Eirin's feedback early.¹⁰⁶ Notable similarities exist between this system and the prewar prior consultation system, but this time, under the authority of the self-regulatory Eirin rather than the government. Times may have changed, but the financial incentive to minimize costly post-production cuts ensured the cooperation of the majors.

Scripts for Pink Films, on the other hand, were notoriously unreliable. Scriptwriters often intentionally shorthanded their scripts, eliding objectionable portions, in an attempt to have these scenes pass by the censors unnoticed at the level of the script check.¹⁰⁷ Director Takechi Tetsuji, for example, had adopted this tactic in his previous projects of 1964, *Day Dream (Hakujitsumi)* and in *Red Chamber (Kokeimu)*, although to little avail since the Eirin censors were wise to this strategy by this time.¹⁰⁸ Conversely, as Sakata re-

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counts, independent companies often submitted particularly lurid and sordid scripts for Eirin review to get the attention of a production sponsor or a distributor.¹⁰⁹ In either case, because the scripts of Pinks were untrustworthy, Eirin was forced to rely instead on the print itself, further exacerbating the time pressure inherent to the Pinks with their rapid turnaround times.

What made regulating these films most difficult was the fact that the label “Pink” flourished on the scent of the illicit that Eirin was supposed to be stamping out. Provoking Eirin only increased their illicit aura, which could then be capitalized on by publicity that hyped the erotic appeal of the taboo. Like the recalcitrant producers and distributors of the strip films, “educational” sex films, and imported erotic films back in the early 1950s, these Pinks also benefited from the publicity caused by these scandals, which were often strategically provoked by savvy directors and producers. Recognizing this, Eirin inspector Kobayashi refused to discuss contemporary incidents in his 1955-56 articles for *Kinema junpo* out of fear of unwittingly publicizing the offending films.¹¹⁰

Perhaps most importantly, unlike the majors, the Pinks lacked any studio-appointed “cooperative” liaison, who could provide the kind of “internal self-restraint mechanism” that, as noted by Kobayashi above, ensured the early smooth functioning of Eirin.¹¹¹ In the case of independent companies, instead the director or producer negotiated directly and often contentiously with Eirin and then proceeded to provocatively capitalize on these tensions in their advertising campaigns, as we will see in the case of director Takechi Tetsuji below.

This is not, however, to characterize the Big 5 studios as saintly by any means. Again, it is worth stressing that the tensions with Eirin over sexual representation did not emanate solely from these “independent” Pinks, but also from the major studios and foreign film importers. All were jostling for a share of the profitable pie, readily demonizing one another in the hopes of appealing to moral law to gain market share. As Kobayashi admitted in 1956, seven years after its inception, Eirin continued to encounter problems even with the Big 5 companies over the sexual morals clause, particularly bedroom scenes and bath scenes.¹¹² Even in the late 1950s, only Toei dared to brag to the media that they were the “sole company” not producing adult films, although this too would soon change.¹¹³ In 1963, the major studios too began producing adult films in earnest with films like Imamura Shohei’s *Insect*

Woman (*Nihon konchuki*, 1963), which included an infamous incestuous suckling scene between father and daughter that cleverly dodged Eirin regulations.¹¹⁴ In 1963, out of 37 total adult domestic films, the majors either produced or distributed 8 (or about 21.6%) of these; in 1964, the number reached 30 (30.6%) of the 98 adult domestic films, with 19 of these produced by the Big 5.¹¹⁵

And again, the challenge to maintaining Eirin's standards came not just from domestic companies, but also from the international imports. In 1964, the Soviet Union/Finnish film *Silence* (dir. Vladimir Basov) was boldly advertised as "the first masturbation scene screened in Japanese theaters."¹¹⁶ After pornography was decriminalized in Denmark in 1969 and in Sweden in 1970, with other European countries soon following suit, Eirin became increasingly unable to stem the flood. US films also posed a challenge, especially independents that often bypassed Hays Code inspections.¹¹⁷ Even imported US films that had passed the Hays Code, the template for Eirin's own original regulations, offered little guarantee, especially after the Code was significantly revised in September of 1966. And all guarantees were off after the US shifted to a ratings system in 1968 and after the 1970 US Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography definitively rejected restricting sexually explicit materials from adults and instead recommended controls or legislative action only in the case of youths.

Kids, Pinks, and Advertising

As "adult films," the Pinks' strongest defense was to argue that the films were meant for the eyes of adults only, a line of reasoning that was increasingly gaining currency internationally, if not domestically. Although there were no parallel governmental policy developments in Japan, there seems to have been an unofficial shift in the mid to late 1960s to this policy, particularly on the part of Eirin, which increasingly began targeting advertisements and posters, even more so than films' content per se.¹¹⁸ In October 1965, Eirin instituted a policy of affixing the Eirin seal to advertisements and in November instituted a new committee, the Committee to Promote the Strengthening of the Ethics of Ads and Publicity (Senden Kokoku Rinri Katsudo Kyoka Suishin Inikai), that included one member from the inde-

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pendents, marking the first occasion in which an independent company had a representative on an Eirin committee.¹¹⁹

In January 1968, the Independent Film Distribution Association (*Dokuritsu Eiga Haikyu Kyokai*) was established. Although not near the magnitude of Eiren, the organization of such an association represented the first important step in bringing these “indies” into a cooperative and organized union with Eirin, particularly regarding advertisements. In a March 8, 1968 meeting between this newly formed association and Eirin, the independents agreed: 1) to strictly follow prefectural regulations, 2) to give consideration to titles that give the impression of sexual relations, 3) to take similar care with the cumulative effect of various designs on posters, and 4) with the combined effect of titles, graphics, and titillating lines.¹²⁰ Although these regulations were initially designed for the Pinks, they soon came to apply to the other studios as well, suggesting again that the divide between the majors and the minors was less a qualitative difference than one of degree. On April 21, 1968, a discussion group about advertisements convened that included newspaper organizations, Eirin inspectors and management, major domestic and foreign companies, and a representative from Kokuei. The group objected to ads that emphasize the fact that a film was an “adult film” or that it was banned abroad and stressed that advertisements needed particular care because “newspapers enter the home and are seen by youths.”¹²¹

In part, this increased attention to advertisements on the part of Eirin was likely because the salacious advertisements often were what gained the unwanted attention of the moralists, who were not likely attending these films themselves. But another reason for the strict attention to ads, posters, and titles was to ensure that adult films were “seen” only by adults, not contaminating innocent and young passersby. But like their predecessors the Sun Tribe films, an adult ratings category for Pink Films repeatedly failed to make the films immune from being targeted by the censors. In the fall of 1966, Osaka prefecture established a mass media discussion group to develop a strategy for dealing with the explosive numbers of independent Pinks being produced, particularly in the Kansai area. That their central concern was the films’ deleterious effects on youths is suggested by the invited participants: representatives from nine independent Pink companies and from the Osaka Youth Protection organization.¹²² Films were particularly unsuccessful in warding off an attack when they featured young protagonists engaged in vio-



Figure 13: Female lead runs around the perimeter of the American Yokota Air Force Base in *Black Snow*.

lent and sexual acts, as we will see was the case with Takechi Tetsuji's *Black Snow*, the first film that was tried for violating obscenity law, despite the fact that it had legitimately passed Eirin's inspection.

Prosecuting the Pinks, Pinkos, and (Roman) Porno

***Black Snow* (1965)**

In the mid-1960s, the self-proclaimed “outsider” director Takechi Tetsuji, head of the aptly named “Outsider” (Daisan) Production Company, rankled the industry and state censors by flaunting his antagonistic dealings with Eirin in advertisements that provoked Eirin, PTAs, and police equally. For both his 1964 cult-classic *Daydream* and his 1965 “anti-base” film *Black Snow*, Takechi bragged to the media that he would have his female lead sprint fully naked through a department store and Yokota US Army base, respectively, in

clear contravention of Eirin regulations at the time.¹²³ As Takechi recognized, hyping the film's taboo scenes was a strategy to incite censors and spectators alike. The infamous scene in *Black Snow* in which the female protagonist runs naked around the Yokota base fence (Fig. 13) provoked the US base soldiers as well, who, in an unscripted moment that must have delighted Takechi, follow her in an army jeep with sirens ablaze on the inside of the gate attempting unsuccessfully to halt the actress or the camera from running.

Again, from the perspective of Eirin, their organization's efficacy depended crucially on the cooperation of the point person assigned to work with them. For *Daydream*, Takechi had, in an unprecedented move, petitioned Eirin to have one of the less accommodating inspectors, Kobayashi Masaru, taken off the case, flummoxing Eirin to the extent that they arranged for a representative from Shochiku, the distribution company of his next film *Red Chamber*, to act as the point person for that film's inspection.¹²⁴ With Nikkatsu as the distributor for *Black Snow*, Eirin found itself facing Takechi head-to-head once again, however. Writing many years later, Eirin employees Endo Tatsuo and Sakata Ei'ichi both named Takechi as the most antagonistic director, demonizing him for "dragging Eirin into a trial" and for opening the floodgates of rebellion by the heretofore mostly cooperative Pinks.¹²⁵

Both films provoked the moral outrage of the censors, and, like their predecessors, were targeted particularly for their ability to corrupt vulnerable youth spectators notwithstanding the fact that both films were "adult films." When *Daydream* became a big hit, especially by Pink standards with three million yen in opening box office revenues, the backlash was swift: the Tokyo Mother's Association initiated a phone and letter campaign against Eirin in an attempt to have the film pulled from distribution; Tokyo legislators proposed a Regulation to Nurture Healthy Youths, prompting the film industry (but notably, not Takechi himself) to quickly issue an apology.¹²⁶ In the case of *Black Snow*, such charges were fueled because its central protagonist is the teenage son of the madam of a whorehouse set on the outskirts of Yokota Air Base, who, along with his crew, commit acts of cruelty, murder, and sex including incest. According to the president of the Tokyo Mother's Association, who appeared as a prosecution witness in the lower court trial, the film "was nothing more than one that will tempt youths to evil and do insult to women."¹²⁷ The High Court judges concurred on this point, noting in their

verdict that despite the film's adult rating, this regulation was not uniformly followed by all theaters and even the age of 18 was no guarantee of sexual maturity, citing as evidence for this, the preponderance of sex crimes by 18-20 year-olds.¹²⁸

When faced with the threat of criminal charges and calls for its dissolution, Eirin's response followed its by now well-established pattern, but this time failed to stem the tide against it. Just days after the *Black Snow* incident, on June 18, 1965, Eirin heads apologized in the newspapers and on television, and all the Eirin inspectors, including the manager Sakata, were put on "best behavior,"¹²⁹ and just two months later, in August 1965, a new set of very strict "New Regulations" including the "Administrative Chair's Directives Regarding Sex and Mores" (*Sei fuzoku ni kansuru kanri iincho no shitei*) were issued.¹³⁰ The Chair of Eirin Takahashi even appeared as a cooperative key prosecution witness, who had handed over Eirin documents to the prosecutor.¹³¹ Notwithstanding these measures, Eirin itself was targeted when the police filed documents to the prosecutor's office calling for indictments for not just Takechi as director, but for over 40 people total, everyone from the actors and the president of Nikkatsu, the company that had distributed the film, to, most significantly, the Eirin inspectors themselves.¹³²

This incident again illustrated with abundant clarity the nearly impossible task Eirin had undertaken as a "self-regulatory" agency headed by an ex-governmental authority. On the one hand, Eirin's eager cooperation with the authorities led many in the film industry to lambaste it as a quasi-governmental agency: most famously Nakahira Ko, the director of the acclaimed Sun Tribe film *Crazed Fruit*, even called for Eirin's dissolution in a provocatively titled essay "An Argument to Abolish Eirin," fuming, "Eirin itself has no positive effect on films and lacks the power to prevent such movies as Takechi's.... It'd be best to abolish it as soon as possible."¹³³ The media, on the other hand, as with the Sun Tribe scandal, was swift to condemn Eirin for conspiring with the amoral film industry to produce dirt, or as the *Yomiuri* put it, "to incite dirty sexual urges by peeking into other people's bedrooms in the name of free speech."¹³⁴

What this incident also illustrated anew was that distinguishing between the Pinks and the "pinkos" was not so clearcut.¹³⁵ Like the Occupation-period and even the prewar regulations that divided offenses into "Public Morals" and "Public Order," Eirin's regulations too encompassed both "Sex

and Mores” regulations alongside a “Nations and Society” clause that deemed films should “respect the customs and people’s feelings of all nations,” which dictated that films “aim for peaceful cooperation with all people. Avoid any expressions that disrespect foreigners or might cause prejudice against other peoples.”¹³⁶ In fact, during their initial inspections of the film, the Eirin inspectors seem to have erred by focusing too much on the political, rather than the sexual, content of the film.¹³⁷ And the lower court judges in the *Black Snow* verdict noted their “fear that the application of Eirin regulations might be taken too far” in the case of its “Nations and Society” clause,¹³⁸ implying there was a danger that Eirin tended to censor not just sexual content, but also ideological content, particularly the kind of anti-Americanism embodied in Takechi’s film.

Most importantly, the *Black Snow* trial clearly indicated that Eirin’s seal of approval was no future guarantee of immunity from state prosecution for either filmmakers or Eirin itself. Both the lower court (on July 19, 1967) and the High Court (on September 17, 1969) ruled the defendants—director Takechi and Murakami Satoru, the distribution chief at Nikkatsu—not guilty, but whereas the former verdict depended on the court’s judgment that the film itself was not obscene, the latter’s depended largely on Eirin’s seal of approval. Eirin found itself under intense scrutiny after the 1969 High Court verdict that ruled Eirin had erred in judgment by passing *Black Snow* since the film was in fact obscene. And, as these judges noted, exculpating the defendants in this trial because the film had passed Eirin was a unique exception: “This is absolutely a unique first case. It is essential that the film industry is aware that there will not necessarily be a similar verdict (i.e. not-guilty) in the future now that it has become generally known that one can be charged with criminal responsibility even if [a film] passes Eirin.”¹³⁹

Escalating Tensions between Eirin and the Police: 1970

Further emboldened by the *Black Snow* High Court verdict of September 1969, the police repeatedly challenged Eirin’s authority. In July of 1970, the police formed a 15-person Colloquium on the Issue of Sexual Morality (Sei Fuzoku Mondai Kondankai) made up of “learned citizens” from diverse occupations including film critics (Masuda Takamitsu), television news hosts (NHK morning host Godai Riyako), authors (novelist Fujishima Taisuke),

college professors, and newspaper reporters. These members responded to a police questionnaire asking their opinions on the depictions of sexual expression in 12 recent Pink Films that had been passed by Eirin.¹⁴⁰ Again, Eirin was tellingly left out of the loop, not discovering the police's plan until reporters revealed the covert investigation to Eirin in conversations with Sakata Ei'ichi and other Eirin employees and to the public in a headline in *Asahi* on September 2nd that read: "Investigating Eirin's Responsibility. Police's Aggressive Course of Action. Conspicuous Adult Films."¹⁴¹ When the Colloquium members concluded that the sexual depiction in Pink Films was indeed "too severe," the police pressured Eirin to tighten their regulations of Pinks that were "too much for one's eyes" (*me ni amari*) calling the 12 films passed by Eirin "borderline obscene" and threatening to indict.¹⁴²

In an attempt to squelch the rising tide of criticism, Eirin employed a familiar counter-strategy. On September 3, 1970, they set up a public meeting with Ikeda, police members from the Prevention of Crimes Unit, the Public Safety Division, and the Mores Section Chief, and about 50 news reporters and cameramen present. At the meeting, when presented with a scrapbook of still photos from the 12 Pink Films, Eirin argued that this was an invalid method of determining the obscenity of a film. But, when shown photos that clearly showed things prohibited by Eirin's regulations, they, in a familiar refrain, argued that the films were no less or more obscene than other available entertainments, including strip clubs and racy publications; Sakata Ei'ichi claimed these examples were not even particularly problematic because he himself was not called to arbitrate (as his role at the time dictated); and finally, they fell back on their role as an "advisory", not regulatory agency, stressing that Eirin did not represent the law, but merely suggested filmmakers "take care with" certain items.¹⁴³

This time, Eirin's counter-strategy managed once more to forestall police and government action, but it failed to sway public opinion and spurred a spate of articles in the media criticizing Eirin. The *Mainichi* headline of September 11, 1970 warned: "Eirin, Either Tighten Regulations or Police will Tackle Pink Films"; *Asahi* ran a special series of articles on "Eirin's Job" in the September 14th, 16th, and 17th afternoon editions; and a *Yomiuri* headline on September 27th declared "Limits Must Go Hand-in-Hand with a Changing Society."¹⁴⁴ The members of a subsequent panel discussion in *Asahi* entitled "Adult Films and Freedom of Expression" unanimously de-

monized Eirin for passing the films: the police representative from the Prevention of Crimes Unit declared these 12 films obscene based on the High Court verdict that *Black Snow* was obscene; film critic Sato Tadao inquired about Eirin's standards for passing films; and feminist critic Kamisaka Fuyuko sided with the authorities even though she admitted no personal knowledge of the particular films, or the genre, saying, "I haven't seen any Pink Films, but things that go too far should be regulated."¹⁴⁵ As Sakata Ei'ichi recognized, the actual content of the films mattered very little since their salacious titles were sufficient to provoke the ire of the police and moralists: "Back Door Introduction to Sex Education" and "Very Secret Diary of Female Students."¹⁴⁶

The Nikkatsu Roman Porno (and Pink) Trial (1972-80)

The police's thinly-veiled threats would be realized in the subsequent 1972-1980 Nikkatsu Roman Porno trial in which Eirin itself would be indicted alongside Nikkatsu directors and studio executives. In fact, listed in the indictment alongside three comparably high-budget (at 7-8 million yen) Roman Porno films, a brand pioneered by Nikkatsu studio in November 1971, was a Pink Film that had screened on a triple bill on January 19, 1972 alongside two of the indicted Nikkatsu films: *High School Geisha* (*Jokosei geisha*, dir. Umezawa Kaoru, 1972) produced by Purima and purchased by Nikkatsu. Even for a Pink, its budget, at 2.6 million yen, was exceedingly low. *High School Geisha* features two geisha, a village priest, and a pornographic author named Kafu—a homophonous reference to the famed author Nagai Kafu, whose Taisho-period story was being tried contemporaneously in an obscenity trial at the lower court level and would ultimately reach the Supreme Court in 1980—who have sex in varying combinations in reality and in their fantasies. The indictment, once again, precipitated the issuance of yet another round of newer and stricter regulations by Eirin.¹⁴⁷

On the one hand, the inclusion of Pinks on triple bills with Nikkatsu Roman Porno suggests again the lack of any meaningful distinction between the films produced and distributed by the majors and those produced by the minors, at least in the eyes of spectators. Any distinction was further blurred by the continued practice of hybrid minor production and major distribution routes that had been evident back in the strip films of the early 1950s and

again with Takechi's films in the mid-1960s. The joint indictment of an independently produced Pink Film and ones produced by Nikkatsu studio would seemingly further support the notion that any division of *pinku* indies and *poruno* majors was a false one in the eyes of the censors as well. But, interestingly, in the eyes of the state prosecutors and judges who tried the case, there seems to have existed a pronounced distinction between the two that merited significantly different assessments of legal culpability and even of the films' obscenity.

In the case of the three Nikkatsu Roman Porno, the defendants charged in the indictment under Article 175 were the three Nikkatsu film directors (Fujii Katsuhiko, Yamaguchi Sei'ichiro, and Kondo Yukihiro) and two top executives at Nikkatsu (film department head Murakami Satoru, and section chief Kurosawa Man). In addition, the three Eirin inspectors, Arata Masao, Yana Sei, and Takei Shohei, who had inspected the films, were charged with being "accessories to the crime of distributing obscenity" (Article 62, Criminal Code) because they had failed to make the necessary cuts and revisions during the inspection process and thereby "made possible the screening of the films in general theaters and this facilitated the other producers' crime."¹⁴⁸ Of the four films, only *High School Geisha* was not checked by Eirin at the level of either script check or final print and instead underwent only a single inspection of its rush print, with one of the two inspectors assigned to the case only seeing half of this rush print because of scheduling conflicts. In addition, as was the norm for Pink Films with their rapid turnaround times, this inspection occurred only the day before the film began screening on November 26, 1971 whereas the others underwent multiple checks with much more lead time before general screenings.¹⁴⁹

In the case of the Pink Film *High School Geisha*, Watanabe Teruo (aka Yoyogi Chu), the executive director of Purima, the company from which Nikkatsu had purchased the film, was also indicted. However, in a surprising twist, the director, Umezawa Kaoru was exempted from prosecution and instead appeared as a cooperative prosecution witness. Umezawa offered damning testimony against both the studio executives and Eirin. He testified that Purima executive Watanabe had commissioned him for the project from the start "to create a humorous local piece" and later asked him to add "low-brow slapstick" scenes last minute. During his initial questioning by the police, he stated that he did not want to shoot two such additional sex scenes

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and agreed only after “protesting passionately.” He also fingered Eirin, noting that he was skeptical that the film would pass because of a few scenes, including one of the “69” position, and readily admitted that his film contained more sexual expression than *Black Snow*.¹⁵⁰ By targeting the business executives at major studios like Nikkatsu and at independent companies like Purima for whom they sought the longest prison terms, in part, the prosecutor was undoubtedly attempting to send a clear message to the industry.¹⁵¹ But the glaring omission of the director of the Pink Film also suggests that, in the eyes of the state, a Pink director was somehow deemed less culpable for his work than either the producers and distributors, or even the Eirin censors.

According to the judges, however, none of the nine defendants was criminally culpable as per the not-guilty verdicts issued by the lower court on June 23, 1978 and upheld by the High Court on July 18, 1980. Nikkatsu studio was not to blame for pioneering Roman Porno as a last-ditch survival strategy to salvage the bankrupt studio, in large part because it was patterned after the pre-existing Pinks: as the lower court judges noted in their verdict, “Nikkatsu too decided to enter into the production and distribution of so-called adult films based on the fact that adult films (commonly known as ‘Pink Films’) produced by independent production companies had inexpensive production costs and moreover offered a stable market.”¹⁵²

If the pre-existing independent Pink Films helped to exculpate the major studio Nikkatsu for producing Roman Poruno, then the co-existing “Blue Films”, or the underground movies circulating at venues not belonging to Zenkoren, offered a convenient scapegoat that helped both the Pinks and Roman Porno escape the court’s censure. The films themselves were deemed not obscene because, as the lower court judges reasoned, the Pink Film by Umezawa and the three Nikkatsu Roman Poruno were “unlike so-called Blue Films and did not, as the prosecutor asserted, *depict* sexual intercourse per se, but instead *suggested* sexual intercourse and other sex acts.”¹⁵³ According to the High Court judges, the Pink Film *High School Geisha* was especially immune to criticism in this respect because its effect was deemed “comedic” rather than erotic with its “artificial performances and its exaggerated theatricality” during the sex scenes.¹⁵⁴ The use of comedy to forestall the censors’ criticism was, in fact, a policy advocated by Eirin after the police targeted the 12 Pinks in the fall of 1970 as discussed above.¹⁵⁵ Yet again, a counter-strate-

gy devised by Eirin in the face of police criticism had effectively immunized a later film from obscenity charges.

Most importantly for the future of censoring erotic adult films, Eirin was definitively upheld as the authoritative arbiter of morality and films, as an organization that, according to the judges, had “society’s approval and trust based on its track record in our country” and for “its established societal role in terms of preventing violations of sexual morality and sexual mores in films.”¹⁵⁶ Although during the Nikkatsu trial, in defiance of Eirin, prefectures had increasingly bestowed “harmful entertainment designations” on general films not labeled “adult films,” after Eirin’s resounding endorsement by the High Court judges in 1980, such challenges abated, at least for the moment.¹⁵⁷

Taming the Pinks and Pornos

The push and pull among the state and industry censors, the moral guardians, mass media, and the film industry did not, of course, end with this incident, although it marked the last high-profile judicial proceedings against film. But the verdict in the Nikkatsu trial suggests the complex dynamics involved with policing “insider” and “outsider” producers and distributors of erotic films that, as we have seen, were evident from the start of Eirin in the immediate postwar.

Based on the Nikkatsu incident, in the eyes of the law, Pinks occupied a highly ambivalent status that was somehow simultaneously exculpatory and culpable. The Pink director Umezawa himself did not even merit an indictment, although his film did, while the very pre-existence of Pink Films helped gain the indicted Nikkatsu studio-sanctioned products an acquittal. Both Pinks and Nikkatsu Roman Porno, in turn, were ultimately vindicated by yet another true “outsider”: the illegitimate Blue Films. In sum, Pinks offered immunity for the production of pornos by a major studio like Nikkatsu, while at the same time depended on yet another outsider for its own immunity. In the eyes of the courts, sexual representation sanctioned by studios and Eirin offered at least some reassuring restraints.

POLICING THE PINKS

But what is the relationship between legal charges (or immunity) and artistic or commercial success in the eyes of the industry itself? Surprisingly, the traitorous director Umezawa was redeemed in both legal and Pink Film circles in distinct contrast with the fate of outspoken defendant-director Yamaguchi Sei'ichiro, who had most vociferously defended the right to produce pornos in his testimony at the trial and in the media. In the verdict, Yamaguchi's film was deemed the most potentially obscene by both sets of judges,¹⁵⁸ while Umezawa's was deemed least potentially obscene. But contrary to what this might suggest about the erotic potential of their filmmaking, after the trial, while Umezawa's resume as a Pink director only flourished, Yamaguchi's floundered. After the trial, the Pink Film industry readily embraced Umezawa, who went on to direct over 200 films from 1965 through 1987 for independent companies. Yamaguchi, on the other hand, directed only two more films after *Love Hunter*, a Nikkatsu Roman Porno sequel called *Love Hunter: Desire (Koi no karyudo yokubo, 1973)* and a documentary film for Art Theatre Guild on Meiji-era poet Kitamura Tokoku in 1977.¹⁵⁹

When indicted back in 1965, director Takechi Tetsuji suggested that artistic fame as a Pink director goes hand-in-hand with state censorship when he likened the *Black Snow* indictment to the awarding of the prestigious Imperial Cultural Decoration (*Bunka Kunsho*) by the Emperor: "To be indicted by the state authorities is the ultimate badge of honor for an artist. It beats getting a Cultural Decoration. With this, I've become a first-class artist."¹⁶⁰ But, based on the succession of successful "outsider" challengers to the censors' authority since the postwar, the ultimate badge of honor for an erotic film director was not always an obscenity indictment by the state at all. Instead, it depended on one's ability to capitalize on being marked as an "outsider" without outing oneself entirely. If the line between illegitimate and legitimate, and between outsider and insider was navigated deftly, the policing of the Pinks and Pornos could paradoxically boost rather than block the production of those very same films.

NOTES

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- ¹ In 1958, attendance was 1.1 billion, but went down to 863 million in 1961, and to 511 million in 1963. This downward trend continued, but was offset to a degree by the much lower production costs of the Pinks. Distributors' income remained proportionately higher than attendance figures, at 29.9 million in 1958, up to 30 million in 1961, and 25.3 in 1963, or almost 86% of the 1958 level (Eiren, http://www.eiren.org/statistics_e/index.html).
- ² See Domenig, "Vital Flesh"; Sharp, "Midnight Eye Round-Up."
- ³ Richie, "The Japanese Eroducton," 336 in this volume.
- ⁴ Sato, "Nihon eiga no jokyo," 327.
- ⁵ In fact, at times, these critics objected to the films less on moralistic or even artistic grounds than on erotic ones, deeming them insufficiently arousing: Richie dismissed these as the "limpest of softcore" (Richie, "The Japanese Eroducton," 332 in this volume) and Sato Tadao characterized them as "the filming of some amateur actresses naked in a room of some apartment," accusing them of "selling shabby eroticism" (Sato, "Nihon eiga no jokyo," 327). Sato even came to the defense of their successors, appearing as a defense witness in the lower court Nikkatsu Roman Porno trial.
- ⁶ Williams, *Hard Core*, 14.
- ⁷ In considering the productive nature of censorship here, I take my cue from the works of US film scholars Lea Jacobs (*The Wages of Sin*) and Annette Kuhn (*Cinema, Censorship, and Sexuality, 1909-1925*) on early Hollywood censorship. But because there are no open archives of film censorship in Japan, research materials to conduct in-depth case studies are comparably limited.
- ⁸ For an overview of 20th century film censorship, see Endo, "Eirin," 329. For detailed accounts of prewar and wartime film censorship, see Makino, *Nihon eiga ken'etsu-shi*; High, *The Imperial Screen*; Hase, "The Origins of Censorship"; Gerow, "Swarming Ants and Elusive Villains"; and Kasza, *The State and Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945*.
- ⁹ *Nihon koku kenpo*, <http://law.e-gov.go.jp/htmldata/S21/S21KE000.html>.
- ¹⁰ Hirano, *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo*, 37-38, 44-45; 154-162; Adachi, *Eirin*, 33.
- ¹¹ Rubin, "The Impact of the Occupation on Literature," 169; Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 411-12. Soldiers were ordered to refrain from these public displays of affection in reality as well, as per a March 22, 1946 GHQ order (Hirano, *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo*, 159).

POLICING THE PINKS

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- ¹² Ibid., 79-80; for a list of examples, see page 283, footnote 106; in one intriguing case, the censors deemed that a rape victim had not resisted her attacker adequately.
- ¹³ Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 51-55. This book is a collection of a series of essays published in *Kinema junpo* from November 1955 through November 1956 about his experiences as an Eirin inspector, which he served as from 1949 until 1966. The timing of the book's publication on November 15, 1956 was undoubtedly motivated by the attention Eirin was receiving in the media as a result of the Sun Tribe scandal discussed below.
- ¹⁴ Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 86-87. This volume is a 1977 collection of essays serialized in the monthly magazine *Shinebi—Age* from November 1974 for 18 months. Sakata served as an Eirin inspector from October 1949 until January 1957 when he became the Secretary-General of the Eirin Commission of Councilors until 1971, at which point he then became the section manager of the inspectors from June 1965 through 1971 and served on the Council on Children's Film Viewing from January 1972 through December 1973 (Adachi, *Eirin*, 176-77).
- ¹⁵ See John Allyn of CCD discussing films in 1949 (cited in Hirano, *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo*, 80) and also CIE officer Major Daniel C. Imboden, who in response to a petition by 80 publishers about why CCD was ignoring the booming lowbrow *kasutori* magazines, advised that such control was up to the Japanese legal system (cited in Rubin, "The Impact of the Occupation on Literature," 170).
- ¹⁶ Cited in and translated by Beer, *Freedom of Expression in Japan*, 336.
- ¹⁷ For more on obscenity trials in the postwar, see Cather, *The Art of Censorship in Postwar Japan*.
- ¹⁸ Adachi, *Eirin*, 44-45. The majority of below information on the early formation of Eirin is derived from *Eirin: 50-nen no Ayumi*, a 50th year commemorative anniversary history privately published by Eirin. I thank former Eirin chair Ide Magoroku and Secretary General of the Management Team, Kodama Kiyotoshi, for sharing information and a copy of this privately published volume with me (Eirin Interview, May 2008).
- ¹⁹ Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 51. Another early inspector, Sakata Ei'ichi recalled that inspectors who were not attending screenings reported daily to CIE offices where the Japanese-American interpreters conveyed CIE directives about film inspection procedures and offered detailed assessments of inspections completed by Eirin (Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 80).
- ²⁰ Hirano, *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo*, 97-98.

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- ²¹ Although the emphasis on ethics (*rinn*) here echoes prewar censorship discourse in Japan as well, Eirin's mission statement most strikingly mirrors the opening of the 1930 Hays Code: "If motion pictures present stories that will affect lives for the better, they can become the most powerful force for the improvement of mankind.... No picture shall be produced that will lower the moral standards of those who see it" (MPPDA, "The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930").
- ²² Adachi, *Eirin*, 185-86.
- ²³ For the complete initial regulations, see Adachi, *Eirin*, 185-86; Kuwahara *Kirareta waisetsu*, 20-21; Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 170-71.
- ²⁴ Endo, "Eirin," 330.
- ²⁵ Beer, *Freedom of Expression in Japan*, 340, emphasis mine.
- ²⁶ Adachi, *Eirin*, 41.
- ²⁷ Currently the Shadanhojin Nihon Eiga Seisakusha Renmei (see Eiren website, http://www.eiren.org/history_e/index.html). Throughout the essay, I have maintained English translations from the English-language websites of organizations for the sake of consistency.
- ²⁸ One each was initially appointed from Shochiku, Toho, Daiei, Shintohto, Toyoko Eiga, and Oizumi Eiga, with these last two merging in April 1951 to become Toei (Adachi, *Eirin*, 42).
- ²⁹ Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 130.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.
- ³¹ Adachi, *Eirin*, 43.
- ³² Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 148.
- ³³ Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 58.
- ³⁴ Hirano, *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo*, 40.
- ³⁵ Writing in 1977, Sakata recalls that they were bi-monthly whereas Kobayashi writes in 1955-56 that they were weekly (Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 158-62; Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 30).
- ³⁶ Adachi, *Eirin*, 47.

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- ³⁷ Ibid., 47-48. In addition, the committee now included two representatives each from the directors' and writers' guilds, two from educational film companies, and one from the theater owner's association Zenkoren.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 43-44.
- ³⁹ Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 130.
- ⁴⁰ Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 22-25; Adachi, *Eirin*, 48; Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 63-73. Other titles included: "Strip Tokyo" (*Sutorippu Tokyo*) and "Naked Angel" (*Hadaka no tenshi*).
- ⁴¹ Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 22-23. The translator and publisher were indicted in September 1950 on obscenity charges in a trial that would reach the Japanese Supreme Court in 1957.
- ⁴² Ibid., 23.
- ⁴³ Adachi, *Eirin*, 48-49. For a detailed treatment of these, see Domenig, "A History of 'Sex Education' Films in Japan."
- ⁴⁴ Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 24-25.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 25.
- ⁴⁶ Adachi, *Eirin*, 48-49.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 50; cf. Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 67-74 on Eirin's powerlessness to censor foreign films before then.
- ⁴⁸ Endo, "Eirin," 331; Adachi, *Eirin*, 43, 50-52. Only two types of foreign companies voluntarily participated in Eirin: those belonging to import film cooperation associations and the foreign film departments of Japanese film companies (Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 68).
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 69. Eirin had requested the right to check subtitles during this process, rather than after, but the importers refused and failed to comply (70-72). Cf. Endo, "Eirin," 332.
- ⁵⁰ Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 31; 71-72.
- ⁵¹ Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 148-50.
- ⁵² Adachi, *Eirin*, 51.

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- ⁵³ Ibid., 52; Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 40. Imported films were subject also to Customs censorship as per Article 21 of the Customs Tariff Law, established back in 1910, that prohibited the importation of “works that harmed public safety or mores.” This added layer of censorship further fueled these importers’ claims that they had passed not just the censorship regulations of their country of origin, but also those of Japanese Customs before Eirin inspections.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 41.
- ⁵⁵ Adachi, *Eirin*, 52; Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 40-42.
- ⁵⁶ Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 127.
- ⁵⁷ Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 146. By 1972, Eirin had its own screening facilities.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., 77-79; Endo, “Eirin,” 331. For a list of prefectures with these ordinances, see MEXT, http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo0/toushin/07020115/021.htm.
- ⁵⁹ At the level of script check, Eirin advised 11 cuts. The information below on this scandal is derived from Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 42-43; Endo, “Eirin,” 331; and Adachi, *Eirin*, 52-53.
- ⁶⁰ On the debate within Eirin over developing policies to protect youth spectators, see Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 76-84.
- ⁶¹ In 1955, out of 423 total domestic productions and 196 Western ones, from May to December 1955, 14 Western films and five domestic ones were designated as “geared toward adult” films. For a list of these titles, see Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 44-45.
- ⁶² Eirin May 1955 directive for “Films Geared at Adults” (*Seijin muki eiga*) reprinted in Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 172-72. See pages 172-73 for corollary provisions for designating “recommended” films for youth and pages 81-83 for Kobayashi’s explanation of how these regulations were applied in practice.
- ⁶³ In 1976, about 14-15 “harmful” designations were handed down per month in a total of 31 prefectures (Endo, “Eirin,” 333).
- ⁶⁴ Desser, *Eros Plus Massacre*, 40-41; Asahi shimbunsha, “Taiyo no kisetsu,” 326-27; and Anderson and Richie, *The Japanese Film*, 264-66.
- ⁶⁵ Asahi shimbunsha, “Taiyo no kisetsu,” 332.

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- ⁶⁶ All information here on the Sun Tribe scandal taken from Adachi, *Eirin*, 57-59. The Zenkoku Chiiki Fujin Dantai Renraku Kyogikai, or Chifuren was established on July 9, 1952 (<http://www.chifuren.gr.jp/>). Izawa later appeared as a very effective defense witness for director Takechi Tetsuji in the lower court Black Snow trial (1965-67).
- ⁶⁷ Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 124.
- ⁶⁸ Adachi, *Eirin*, 59.
- ⁶⁹ *State v. Kawaguchi (aka Takechi) Tetsuji*, Tokyo District Court, 193.
- ⁷⁰ Adachi, *Eirin*, 60-63. Calculated based on an approximate average length of 2,500 meters per film. Because of the rise in sexual depictions, the fees for full-length films (over 1,000 meter) were raised from 24 to 26 yen per meter in 1966 and again to 29 yen per meter in 1968 (Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 227).
- ⁷¹ Adachi, *Eirin*, 61-63.
- ⁷² Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 144.
- ⁷³ Adachi, *Eirin*, 10-11; 235. Although it was not until after the Sun Tribe scandal that Eirin successfully integrated all foreign companies, Eirin's push to secure the participation of the US companies began well before the Sun Tribe incident, with Eirin establishing an internal committee to address the issue back in October 1955, and holding a meeting with the Motion Picture Export Association (MPEA) head Eric Johnston back in March of 1956 that resulted in the MPEA members agreeing to Eirin inspections in May 25, 1956 (*Ibid.*, 59-60).
- ⁷⁴ Even this law failed to solve the problem entirely, however, since many theaters were not part of Zenkoren (Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 114).
- ⁷⁵ Adachi, *Eirin*, 235.
- ⁷⁶ Zahlten, *The Role of Genre in Film From Japan* and Domenig, "Vital Flesh." See also Zahlten's "The Prerogative of Confusion: Pink Eroticization of Pain, Flux and Disorientation," forthcoming.
- ⁷⁷ Adachi, *Eirin*, 64-67; Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 59-60; Endo, "Eirin," 205-6. While these regulations were being formulated an even more detailed and strict set of tentative inspection standards were issued (see Endo, "Eirin," 202-5 for a complete list).
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 331; Otsuka "Eiga no jishu kisei to waisetsusei nintei kijun," 67-68.

⁷⁹ A category for Eirin’s “general fundamental principles” was added as well that stated: 1) Eirin would faithfully adhere to the Constitution, and films would respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all nation’s people, and 2) “Films shall not lower the morality of society and accordingly shall not lead spectator’s sympathies toward evil or wrong” (Adachi, *Eirin*, 187-88). For a full reprint of these prefaces and regulations, see 185-88.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 187-88; Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 65-66.

⁸¹ As of 1971, applicable regulations included: the August 10, 1959 official regulations, a September 30th “memo” from the Chair, a “detailed agreement” that represented the consensus of the inspection department members, and another memo from the Chair on August 10th called “Clarification Regarding the Detailed Agreement about Depictions of Bedroom Scenes and Rape” (*State v. Watanabe Teruo et al*, Tokyo High Court, 519).

⁸² Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 78.

⁸³ Adachi, *Eirin*, 84.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁸⁵ Director Kobayashi Satoru, cited in Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 76.

⁸⁶ Adachi, *Eirin*, 85-86.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 86. Police typically first busted (*tekibatsu*) a film, announcing to the suspects and to the media that they were being investigated under suspicion of violating Article 175, often raiding the company’s offices, seizing relevant materials, and beginning their investigation. Once the Police Public Safety Division concluded its investigation, it would send up a request for prosecution to the State Prosecutor’s Office, which would conduct its own review of the materials and determine whether and whom to officially indict (*kiso*).

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁸⁹ Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 78.

⁹⁰ Adachi, *Eirin*, 86-87.

⁹¹ *State v. Kawaguchi (aka Takechi) Tetsuji*, Tokyo District Court, 194.

⁹² Adachi, *Eirin*, 87.

⁹³ Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 201.

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- ⁹⁴ Statistics taken from Adachi, *Eirin*, 191-95. For total number of films inspected, I use here those over 1,500 meters in length, disregarding the medium (900-1,500 meter films) and shorts (under 900 meters).
- ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 42-43; 176.
- ⁹⁷ Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 143-44. After the Sun Tribe scandal, in January 1957, the number again grew to nine total inspectors: five for domestic films, three for foreign films, and one in charge of advertising with another added in May of that year and yet another in 1959 (Adachi, *Eirin*, 62; 176). In 1979, there were 4 for domestic films, 3 for imports, and 2 in advertising (Beer, *Freedom of Expression in Japan*, 341).
- ⁹⁸ Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 70; 13-16. Kobayashi noted having to travel to Kyoto up to six to seven times a year for such emergency screenings the day before openings were scheduled.
- ⁹⁹ Richie, “The Japanese Eroduction,” 335. For example, 1966 Pink Films like *Premarital Sex* (*Konzen kosho*) and *I Can’t Wait Until Night* (*Yoru made matenai*) were only 2,137 meters or 78 minutes and 2,078 meters or 76 minutes respectively. In comparison, non-Pink adult films like Shochiku’s 1950 *The Road to Glory* (*Eiko e no michi*) was 2,457 meters, Mizoguchi’s 1953 *Ugetsu* totaled 2,647 meters, the 1956 *Season of the Sun* was 2,435, and Imamura Shohei’s 1963 *Insect Woman* (*Konchuki monogatari*) reached 3,366 meters. Takechi Tetsuji’s 1964 *Daydream* (*Hakujitsumu*) and his 1965 *Black Snow* (*Kuroi yuki*) were 2,551 and 2,443 meters respectively (meter length taken from JMDB).
- ¹⁰⁰ Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 196.
- ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 197.
- ¹⁰² Watanabe, “Nihon eiga.”
- ¹⁰³ Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 194-96.
- ¹⁰⁴ Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 69.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 129.
- ¹⁰⁷ Alternately, scriptwriters padded the scripts with justifications for potentially objectionable scenes in an attempt to forestall censorship. Takechi used this strategy extensively in his *Black Snow* script, consistently spelling out the political allegory of sexual depictions (see Cather, *The Art of Censorship*, 96).

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- ¹⁰⁸ Former Eirin employee Endo noted that the length of Takechi's script for *Red Chamber* was only one-third the length of typical screenplays with only 43 scenes (Endo, "Eirin," 272; 285). *Black Snow* contained a scant 39 scenes (Takechi, *Sabakareru erosu*, 258-79).
- ¹⁰⁹ Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 194.
- ¹¹⁰ Kobayashi, *Kinjirareta firumu*, 48.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 30.
- ¹¹² *Ibid.*, 45-47.
- ¹¹³ Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 31-32. By 1964, only Toho could somewhat reasonably make this case (see footnote 115 below).
- ¹¹⁴ Kuwahara, *Kirareta naisetsu*, 83-85. See also "Participation of the Big 5 Domestic Film Studios in Adult Films" in Adachi, *Eirin*, 87-90 and Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 193.
- ¹¹⁵ For a list of titles, see Adachi, *Eirin*, 87-88. For 1964, Eirin's appendix lists 30 (or 30.6%) of the 98 total domestic adult films from the majors (191), but in the body of the text lists 19 adult titles that were produced by the majors (four by Daiei, three for Shochiku, six for Toei, one for Toho, and five for Nikkatsu) (*Ibid.*, 88). Presumably, the appendix lists films both produced and distributed by the majors, but the figures are not consistent since for 1964, the appendix numbers eight domestic adult films by the majors, whereas the book lists only seven specific titles either produced or distributed by the majors.
- ¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 91.
- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 98-107.
- ¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 100-101.
- ¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 103-04.

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- ¹²¹ Ibid., 104-05. That none of these measures were particularly successful was evident in the clampdowns on advertising by national and local watchdog agencies later that same year. In December of 1968, the head of the National Youth Problem Investigation Committee and Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office demanded that the film industry exercise stricter self-censorship of "vulgar films" and advertisements that have an adverse effect on youths (Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 148). In January of 1969, there were over 15 letters from regional organizations complaining about adult film posters (Adachi, *Eirin*, 105-06) and, in April 1969, the police directed all prefectures to double up on regulating ads for "suspicious" (*ikagawashii*) adult films (Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 148).
- ¹²² Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 135.
- ¹²³ For Takechi's comments to the media, see Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 103; Endo, "Eirin," 273; Adachi, *Eirin*, 113.
- ¹²⁴ Adachi, *Eirin*, 110-13. In his memoir, Sakata claimed that Kobayashi was ill, but the timing seems suspicious (Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 184).
- ¹²⁵ Adachi, *Eirin*, 71; Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 184-94; 203-218 *passim*. Sakata reports that he started drinking heavily even in the mornings before work, and urinated blood after three days of police questioning during the *Black Snow* investigation (216).
- ¹²⁶ Tokyo did not pass its youth regulation, *Tokyo-to seishonen no kenzen na ikusei ni kansuru jorei*, until 1964. Nagano prefecture remains today the only one without such an ordinance (Nozue, "Eiga rinri no jishu seisei," 43).
- ¹²⁷ Takechi, *Sabakareru erosu*, 213.
- ¹²⁸ *State v. Kawaguchi (aka Takechi) Tetsuji*, Tokyo High Court, 22.
- ¹²⁹ Endo, "Eirin," 340; 320; Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 182; Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 115. After the *Black Snow* incident, two domestic film inspectors chosen from the Youth Investigation committee were added to the Eirin staff (Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 204-5; Adachi, *Eirin*, 175-76).
- ¹³⁰ For the new sex-related regulations, see Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 109-10.
- ¹³¹ Saito, *Nikkatsu poruno saiban*, 170.
- ¹³² Adachi, *Eirin*, 116.
- ¹³³ Cited in Endo, "Eirin," 331.
- ¹³⁴ Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 115; cf. Endo, "Eirin," 325-26.

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- ¹³⁵ See also the case of director Wakamatsu Koji, who was notorious for challenging Eirin, particularly by depicting pubic hair visible on male actors. Though he acquiesced when asked to cut, he stressed that hiding only increased the obscenity (Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 156). See Hirasawa, Hayashi, and Furuhashi's articles on Wakamatsu in this volume.
- ¹³⁶ Endo, "Eirin," 295.
- ¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 296.
- ¹³⁸ *State v. Kawaguchi (aka Takechi) Tetsuji*, Tokyo District Court, 201.
- ¹³⁹ *State v. Kawaguchi (aka Takechi) Tetsuji*, Tokyo High Court, 25; Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 126.
- ¹⁴⁰ Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 238.
- ¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 240-41.
- ¹⁴² Information on this scandal taken from *Ibid.*, 238-54 and Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 158-62.
- ¹⁴³ Sakata, *Waga Eirin jidai*, 240-41; 247.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 250-252.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 254.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 242-43. The police also targeted *This Transient Life (Mujo)*, 1970, produced by Jissoji Pro/Japan ATG and directed by Jissoji Akio, who fumed: "If you're going to ask why sexual depiction is necessary, I'd ask why is eating meals necessary in a home drama?" (Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 160).
- ¹⁴⁷ For the new sex-related regulations, see Kuwahara, *Kirareta waisetsu*, 190-91.
- ¹⁴⁸ Prosecutor's opening, reprinted in Saito *Kenryoku na waisetsu o shitto suru*, 13-14. Two of the indicted Eirin inspectors, Arata and Yana, had also been in charge of inspecting Takechi's *Black Snow*.

¹⁴⁹ In contrast, a rush print of *Love Hunter* (*Koi no karyudo: Rabu hantaa*, dir. Yamaguchi Sei'ichiro, 1972) was previewed by Eirin inspectors eight days before it debuted, and a final print inspected five days beforehand. *Office Lady Diary: Scent of a She-Cat* (*OL nikki: Mesu neko no nioi*, dir. Fujii Katsuhiko, 1972) had its rush prints inspected two times, the first time a full two weeks before its general screening. *The Warmth of Love* (*Ai no nukumori*), as the fourth film that was added to the indictment after it screened in April 19, 1972 while the investigation was already ongoing, received a much more thorough inspection with the script checked before filming even began, an all rush screening on April 5, and a final screening inspection on April 12, seven days before its general screening (*State v. Watanabe Terno et al*, Tokyo District Court, 41; 45-47).

¹⁵⁰ Saito, *Nikkatsu poruno saiban*, 155-157.

¹⁵¹ The indictment called for prison terms of 14-18 months for the studio executives, one year for the directors, and ten months each for the Eirin inspectors.

¹⁵² *State v. Watanabe Terno et al*, Tokyo District Court, 42.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 39-40, emphasis mine.

¹⁵⁴ *State v. Watanabe Terno et al*, Tokyo High Court, 521; 523.

¹⁵⁵ As revealed by one of the defense lawyers during the cross-examination of director Umezawa in the lower court Nikkatsu trial (Saito *Nikkatsu poruno saiban*, 158-161).

¹⁵⁶ *State v. Watanabe Terno et al*, Tokyo District Court, 48.

¹⁵⁷ Adachi, *Eirin*, 133.

¹⁵⁸ *State v. Watanabe Terno et al*, Tokyo District Court, 40 and *State v. Watanabe Terno et al*, Tokyo High Court, 523.

¹⁵⁹ His co-defendant Nikkatsu directors Kondo Yukihiro and Fujii Katsuhiko steadily continued to direct Nikkatsu Roman Poruno with a total of over 60 produced between them after the indictment. Again here, no clear-cut distinction exists between the Pinks and Pornos.

¹⁶⁰ Kuwahara, *Kirareta naisetsu*, 123.

The Actuality of Wakamatsu: Repetition, Citation, Media Event

Yuriko Furuhashi

On November 25, 1970, the famed novelist Mishima Yukio and his private army, the Shield Society (Tate no Kai), occupied the general's office at the Ichigaya headquarters of the Self-Defense Forces in broad daylight. To a rather indifferent crowd of soldiers gathered below the balcony, Mishima delivered his passionate plea to take part in the direct action he staged and to die with him in the name of patriotism. Television crews and journalists who had been called in by Mishima himself were also present at the scene. In spite of the spectacular and meticulously planned staging of his speech, replete with the on-site television cameras and news reporters, the soldiers refused to join his cause. Mishima's speech was broadcast live, and the subsequent ritual suicides by Mishima and another member of the Shield Society, which took place inside the general's office and away from the eyes of journalists, were immediately and widely reported. The news of his anachronistic ritual suicide and failed coup were on the front pages of every newspaper the next day. For the following weeks, the incident made repeated appearances on television programs, in the headlines of newspapers, and on the front covers of weekly magazines. The incident became one of the most well-known media events in the history of Japan.

Less than a month later, a black-and-white film entitled *Sexual Reincarnation: Woman Who Wants to Die* (*Segura magura: Shinitai onna*, 1970) made its quiet appearance in small movie theaters.¹ With ample, formulaic erotic scenes, the film looked like any ordinary Pink Film or soft-core erotica, but with one notable exception. It included several montage sequences composed of re-photographed press photographs and headlines from newspapers and weekly magazines reporting on Mishima's failed coup and subsequent suicide. As would have been evident to viewers at the time, and as is evident from a close reading of the film's citational strategy, the film operates as a parody at mul-



Figure 14: *Sexual Reincarnation*.

tiple levels (including the parody of the media event that capitalized on Mishima's suicide in its immediate aftermath). The film implies, for instance, that one of the protagonists was a member of the Shield Society. This character fails to participate in Mishima's attempted coup as he spends a night with his girlfriend. Moreover, this motif of "failure" to take part in the historic event is one which Mishima used in his novel *Patriotism* (*Yukoku*, 1961) and its 1966 filmic adaptation.

The film *Sexual Reincarnation* was directed by none other than Wakamatsu Koji, a Pink filmmaker renowned for his political radicalism and formal experimentation. It was scripted by his close collaborator, Adachi Masao, and released by Wakamatsu Productions.² *Sexual Reincarnation* not only makes direct reference to Mishima's spectacular suicide, but also the manner in which it draws the spectator's attention to this media event is anything but subtle. Montages composed entirely of still images culled from newspapers and magazines flash across the widescreen. The film's overt strategy of visually incorporating or "citing" journalistic images circulated by the mass media is eye-catching. This striking use of journalistic images is part and parcel of the style of Wakamatsu's work produced in the 1960s and early 1970s; a number of his films from this period similarly appropriate, remediate, and directly cite then current news and media events. It is this citational strategy that confers on his work an uncanny sensation of *actuality*. Certainly, we who watch these films more than 40 years later may not immediately recognize the actuality of their journalistic reference, as the spectators of the time would have done; the topicality of the news may be lost on us. At the same time, what

we ineluctably sense is the strange openness of the films and their lack of closure. Despite being fictional, the diegetic worlds of Wakamatsu's films are contiguous with the historically "real" world outside the screen. Yet these films also strike one as askew in their referential openness to the "real." For the "real" they open up to is already mediated by journalism before its entrance into narrative cinema.

By foregrounding the referential connection between the cinematic image and an on-going media event, such as the Mishima Incident—which was contemporaneous to the production of his film and hence still vivid in the minds of many filmgoers—Wakamatsu's work brings together two economies of the image. On the one hand, it intervenes in the economy of the production, circulation, distribution, and consumption of journalistic images. On the other hand, it intervenes in the comparable economy of cinematic images. While these economies of the image are not identical, they overlap and intersect. A fundamental difference between the two, however, is temporality. The pace with which the image gains currency and exhausts it is much faster within the economy of journalistic images. By contrast, the economy of cinematic images moves slowly, especially when it comes to the production, circulation, and consumption of narrative films. Wakamatsu's work creates a link between the two by playing up the temporal *proximity* between the media event and its calculated repetition. That is, his films attempt to minimize the time lag between the two economies of the image.

It is thus the calculated *timing* of the cinematic repetition of the media event that generates the sensation of actuality that is unique to Wakamatsu's work. My argument is that the critical edge that gave Wakamatsu the reputation for being a political, avant-garde filmmaker derives from this calculated timing of his citational practice. In what follows, I will first examine how this citational strategy allows Wakamatsu to present an immanent critique of the mediatization of politics. I will then discuss how Wakamatsu's work intervenes into the journalistic and cinematic image economies.



Figure 15: *Sexual Reincarnation*.

The Pink Film and the Citation of the Media Event

The timing of *Sexual Reincarnation* was, indeed, well calculated. Wakamatsu and Adachi began working on the script while watching the evening TV news about the Mishima Incident the very night of that shocking event.³ As film critic Hiraoka Masaaki observed at the time of the film's release, the speed with which Wakamatsu Production made *Sexual Reincarnation* was on a par with tabloid journalism. By November 29 (four days after the incident) Adachi finished writing the script. By December 9 the production crew finished shooting the film on location at a small inn in Minakami, a remote town located in the northern part of Japan. According to Hiraoka: "Merely two weeks after the incident, the film was complete. Its pace was comparable to that of weekly magazines."⁴ The film indeed appears to be quite self-conscious of its temporal and referential proximity to tabloid journalism.

For instance, one image that is inserted twice in the film—once at the beginning and once at the end—is a two-page spread taken from the weekly magazine *Shukan yomiuri's* "emergency special issue" dedicated to Mishima's death, published on December 11.⁵ The film reproduces the press photograph of Mishima placed next to an arresting headline that reads "Madness or Sincerity? A Shocking Hour and a Half" in a tight close-up. Within two weeks from this date the film was already showing at theaters.⁶ All of this suggests an exceptionally journalistic sensibility towards timing on the part of Wakamatsu and his crew. The film is actual, up-to-date, and topical on all

fronts as it holds a tight referential relation to the sensational media event that it unabashedly appropriates.

Since *Sexual Reincarnation* falls into the generic category of the Pink Film, and since many of Wakamatsu's films that bear the same journalistic elements are said to belong to this genre, we may surmise that this proximity to journalistic media has something to do with the generic structure of the Pink Film itself. As Donald Richie points out, during the height of the production of Pink Films most production companies were shooting one film per week on average.⁷ This seems to explain, at least partly, the strong affinity between journalism and Wakamatsu's work.

To be sure, Wakamatsu's work was not always shown at movie theaters specializing in soft-core pornography. Theatre Scorpio in Shinjuku programmed the special screenings of Wakamatsu's films as early as 1968, one year after the screening of Adachi's experimental film *Galaxy* (*Gingakei*, 1967), which inaugurated the opening of the theater. Wakamatsu's collaboration with Art Theatre Guild (ATG) in *Ecstasy of the Angel* (*Tenshi no kokotsu*, 1972) also indicates his foothold in the art-cinema circuit. But this is not to say that Wakamatsu stopped being a Pink filmmaker and became an art filmmaker. As Sharon Hayashi compellingly argues, the controversial showings of his earlier Pink Films, such as *Secret Acts Behind Walls* (*Kabe no naka no himegoto*, 1965) and *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* (*Taiji ga mitsuryo suru toki*, 1966) at the Berlin International Film Festival in 1965 and 1966, attest to the permeability of generic boundaries that demarcate "sex film" from "art film".⁸ The special screening event, aptly titled "Wakamatsu Koji's Soulful Demonstration," which featured six films including *Secret Acts Behind Walls* and *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* at Theatre Scorpio in August and September 1968, suggests that the same kind of generic permeability existed in Japan at the time. The history of the Pink Film industry indicates that the timely appropriation of topical, sensational news events (especially those involving violent crimes) was a common industry practice. Given the history of this generic practice, it is worth starting our analysis of the temporal economy of Wakamatsu's work with a consideration of the Pink Film as a genre, to see if it had something to do with his calculated remediation of journalistic materials.

The Economy of the Pink Film

Kobayashi Satoru's *Market of Flesh* (*Nikutai ichiba*, 1962), which is said to be the first Pink Film, is based on an actual rape incident that took place in the Roppongi ward of Tokyo in October 1961.⁹ As Eric Schaefer suggests in his study of the American “exploitation film”—a genre comparable to the Pink Film—this kind of referential practice was also common among exploitation films in the United States. Schaefer notes, “Because exploitation films often drew on the headlines for their story material, they emphasized timeliness in their ads.”¹⁰ Being on the low end of film production, Pink Films share many of the same characteristics of exploitation films: they low budget, produced in a short span of time (often less than a week) by small independent production companies, and habitually focus on adult-only themes and “forbidden” spectacles (mainly nudity and violence). They are usually distributed and exhibited through independent venues and rarely through major film studios or their distribution channels.¹¹

In fact, this last point on distribution is key to the generic definition of the Pink Film. Coined by Murai Minoru, a news reporter and a film critic, the term *pinku eiga* (“Pink Film”) was explicitly used to differentiate independently produced and distributed soft-core pornographic films from similarly themed films made by the major studios. As the film critic Suzuki Yoshiaki reminds us, films such as Imamura Shohei's *Insect Woman* (*Nippon konchuki*, 1963) which was hailed for its tasty eroticism, did not qualify to be called “Pink” because Nikkatsu, one of the major five studios of the time, produced and distributed it.¹²

Another element that is indispensable for distinguishing the Pink Film from other erotic or pornographic films is its postwar origin. Its putative “beginning” is traced back to Kobayashi's *Market of Flesh*, the first independently produced soft-core erotica made after the establishment of Eirin (Japanese Motion Picture Code of Ethics Committee), a non-governmental organization that sets Japan's self-regulatory rating system.¹³ The Pink Film is also a product of the era when television eclipsed cinema and led to the decline of major studios, which in turn allowed small independent companies to gain more control over the circuits of production and distribution. In this sense the Pink Film is not strictly equivalent to what Schaefer has called classical exploitation films (sex-hygiene films, science films, burlesque films),

though these pre-Pink erotic films were frequently screened in Japan long before the emergence of Pink Film in the 1960s.¹⁴

In addition to its growing popularity among young male audiences, the Pink Film, with its marginalized status and its constant struggle against censorship, benefited from an aura of oppositionality in the 1960s. In order to understand the habitual association of Wakamatsu's work with the New Left, one cannot overlook the ideological positioning of the Pink Film as defiant and oppositional to the mainstream cinema. The historical situation of the 1960s—the general decline of the film industry, the increased militarization of the New Left student movement, and the explosion of countercultural and underground art activities—had much to do with this perception of the Pink Film in general and Wakamatsu's work in particular.

Interestingly, Oshima was first among the critics and filmmakers who took this politicized view of the Pink Film. Oshima compared the marginalized position of the Pink Film to the victims of social and economic discrimination in the essay, "Wakamatsu Koji: Discrimination and Carnage," published in the October 1970 issue of the film journal *Eiga hibyo II*. Despite their stylistic and institutional differences, Oshima and Wakamatsu worked in similar social circles and by the time Oshima's essay was published in *Eiga hibyo II*, their paths had begun to run in parallel. After graduating from the elite Kyoto University, Oshima began his filmmaking career at the major Shochiku studio, and was soon applauded by the media as the leader of Japan's New Wave generation. Wakamatsu, on the other hand, started his career in the burgeoning television industry after spending a few years as a day laborer, a *yakuza*, and even some time in prison. Wakamatsu's directorial debut was a minor Pink Film, *Sweet Trap* (*Amai wana*, 1963), produced by the independent production company Tokyo Kikaku, for the meager amount of \$1,800.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Oshima left Shochiku in protest against the repressive measures taken by the studio against the screening of his film *Night and Fog in Japan* (*Nihon no yoru to kiri*, 1960).

Throughout the 1960s, Oshima and Wakamatsu similarly dealt with polemical issues such as militant political activism, crime, sex, and the emperor system. They often shared the same actors (e.g., the Situation Theater actor Kara Juro) and the same crews (e.g., Adachi Masao, who worked as a scriptwriter for both Wakamatsu and Oshima), and the two directors both collaborated with ATG. Wakamatsu also produced Oshima's *In the Realm of*

the Senses (*Ai no koriida*, 1976), a controversial hardcore film that reignited debates about pornography and censorship in Japan.

It is within this historical milieu that we should place Oshima's sympathetic portrayal of Wakamatsu as an oppositional filmmaker. In "Wakamatsu Koji: Discrimination and Carnage," Oshima introduces Wakamatsu as a fellow outcast who poses moral and political threats to the mainstream film industry and who is thus constantly "purged" from it.

The decline of the Japanese film industry that began in 1959 necessarily led to the birth of the so-called Pink Film, though the industry continues to discriminate against it. The most horrifying fact is how unaware the Japanese film industry is about its own discriminatory attitude toward the Pink Film. I repeat: the Japanese film industry gave birth to this bastard child, the Pink Film. The form of discrimination expressed in this relation is the archetype of every mode of discrimination. And Wakamatsu Koji continues to be discriminated against as the very symbol of this form.¹⁶

The metaphor of discrimination against the internal "other" that Oshima uses in this essay shrewdly aligns Wakamatsu with the leftist discourse on minoritarian politics, a gesture that other critics seem to repeat and Wakamatsu himself cultivates retroactively. But the representation of leftist politics in Wakamatsu's films is more ambivalent than it first appears.

Consider the example of *Sex Jack* (*Seizoku*, 1970), a film which was selected for screening at the Cannes International Film Festival in 1971.¹⁷ *Sex Jack* draws on the notorious airplane hijacking known as the Yodogo Hijacking Incident (*Yodogo haijakuken jiken*). In this incident, the members of an ultra-Left communist group, the Red Army Faction, hijacked a commercial airplane and defected to North Korea on March 31, 1970. Three months later, on June 15, 1970 when student-led street protests against the imminent renewal of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty (ANPO) were at their height, Wakamatsu began shooting the film. It opens with a long sequence of documentary footage of helmeted student protesters gathering and marching at Yoyogi Park on the day of the renewal of the ANPO. Given the film's timely release in July 1970, we can safely assume that the topicality of its reference to these two events was not lost on its initial audience. The film's reference to the Yodogo Hi-



Figure 16: *Sex Jack* opening title.

jacking Incident is made even more explicit by its direct appropriation of the hijackers' manifesto, including the famous passage, "We are *Tomorrow's Joe*," in which the young hijackers compared themselves to the hero of the popular contemporary manga, *Tomorrow's Joe* (*Ashita no Jo*) by Chiba Tetsuya.¹⁸

The fictional narrative of *Sex Jack* revolves around a group of leftist student activists (implied to be Red Army Faction members) who regard themselves as a militant vanguard for the masses, along with the young protagonist—a lone unemployed laborer—who lives on "the other side of the river." As Oshima astutely points out, the term *kawamuko* (the other side of the river), used by this young protagonist to introduce himself, functions as a subtle signifier of social discrimination: it is a term used to describe and invoke the image of the poor neighborhood where social and ethnic minorities, shunted from the eye of the general public, live. Using this topological framework of the divided city, the film juxtaposes the idealist student activists to the pragmatic proletariat who clandestinely carries out solitary terrorist attacks on police stations and the Communist Party headquarters.

After a dramatic shoot-out between the policemen and student activists (all of whom the protagonist eventually kills), the film cuts to a striking color sequence. Since the film is shot mostly on black-and-white stock, this sequence delivers a sudden visual jolt. Here the camera slowly pans upward from drops of red paint ("blood") spattered on the muddy riverbank to the horizon, taking the point of view of the protagonist who stands on the "other side" of the river. The film cuts to a close-up of the lower body of the protagonist who zips up a red jacket. Then the film cuts to the celebrated

final shot: the handheld camera mimics the subjective point of view of the protagonist who walks *across* the bridge. For Oshima and other critics who enthusiastically hailed this particular shot as a metonymic gesture of social resistance, the defiant act of crossing the river is more politically subversive and provocative than the student activists' purported revolutionary action.¹⁹ Matsuda Masao goes a step further and proposes an anarchist reading of the final sequence. He argues that the invisible target of assassination hinted in the closing shot is none other than the Emperor, as indicated by the location of the bridge. According to Matsuda, the ultimate violence that the film condones is anti-state terrorism: the violence aimed at the body of the symbolic sovereign.²⁰

In spite of the film's explicit reference to the Yodogo Hijacking Incident, its focus is displaced from the militant form of student activism that envisions the worldwide uprising of the proletariat. Instead, the film foregrounds the solitary act of violence exhibited by the lone protagonist who refuses to join the organized revolutionary movement. While it is possible to interpret this narrative as a critique of social and economic discrimination (Oshima) or a critique of the sovereign power (Matsuda), I want to approach it from a slightly different angle in order to highlight the tension that exists between the film's generic structure and its representation of violence. This entails rethinking the gender politics inherent in the genre of Pink Film in relation to the political violence, which the film's topical reference to the Yodogo Hijacking Incident evokes.

This examination of gender politics is notably absent from Oshima and Matsuda's analysis of *Sex Jack*, a film that presents gratuitous scenes of nudity and pornographic images of ecstatic women and men. Their appraisals of the film also do not question the taken-for-granted primacy of the male hero as the agent of resistance and narrative action. As the feminist film scholar Saito Ayako rightly points out, women's bodies in the work of Wakamatsu (as well as Adachi) are frequently put on screen simply to provide a blank canvas on which to paint vivid pictures of social contradictions.²¹ The women thus occupy the position of the passive object, an inert surface for masculine inscription. Recurrent representations of violated women in Wakamatsu's films seem to corroborate this reading. From *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* (1966), which portrays a captive woman who gets constantly whipped by the middle-aged man (named Marukido Sadao, a pun on the Marquis de Sade), to *Violat-*

ed Angels (1967), in which nurses are murdered by an adolescent boy, Wakamatsu's work shares the narrative tendency in classical Hollywood cinema to sadistically punish women who assert their sexual desire and agency, a disposition that has been roundly critiqued by feminist film scholars such as Laura Mulvey.²²

However, focusing solely on the on-screen representation of violated female bodies on screen would risk overlooking the historical specificities of these pornographic films. For instance, as Sharon Hayashi insightfully argues, the films of Wakamatsu Production from the 1960s onward engage in a close dialogue with emergent discourses on gender and sexuality in Japan by foregrounding a particular set of problematics (e.g., infertility, impotence, sexual reproduction, and abortion) present in these discourses.²³ In addition to their conscious engagement with topical issues such as sexual reproduction and abortion, Wakamatsu's films often blur the boundary between sexual violence and political violence. In spite of its apparent endorsement of male dominance, his work often oscillates between the representations of the violated female body and those of the male body that gets "perversely eroticized through exploration of its weakness and vulnerability."²⁴ The images of violated male bodies are prevalent and the male protagonist frequently takes on the vulnerable position of the bearer of sexual violence. As Andrew Grossman argues in the essay "All Jargon and No Authenticity?—A Phenomenological Inquiry into the Pink Film," included in this volume, the logic of perversion, including masochism so prevalent in the Pink Film still tends towards depoliticization insofar as the Pink Film industry, as part of the culture industry, still operates within the structure of capitalism. Nonetheless, it is precisely the spectacle of the violated male body that complicates the representation of political violence in films like *Go, Go, Second Time Virgin* and *Sex Jack*, prompting us to reconsider the conventional alliance between the leftist politics and Wakamatsu's films.

The solitary protagonist in *Sex Jack* is exemplary in this regard. The unemployed, working-class "outcast" who lives on the other side of the river and carries out a series of terrorist attacks against the authorities is also the one who is subjected to sexual humiliation and violence. His vulnerability is accentuated in the scene where he is coerced into having sex with the female member of the activist group. The protagonist's physical struggle against this coercion and his ultimate refusal to enter into sexual relationships with

women becomes pivotal to the film's allegorical depiction of another kind of violence: the violence inherent in the purportedly democratic structure of consensual politics. One way to complicate the generic structure of Wakamatsu's films is hence to focus on this tension between political activism and sexual activities, and to ask why this tension is accompanied by unremitting topical references to actual incidents of violence, including airplane hijackings, terrorist bombings, homicides, and other sensational crimes.

The Mediatization of Politics and the Police Order

The 1960s saw an intensified mediatization of politics through the proliferation of television. It is worth repeating that this decade in Japan also opened, in 1960, with the first televised assassination—the assassination of Asanuma Inejiro, the head of the Socialist Party, by a young ultranationalist right-wing activist—which was followed by countless spectacles of violence relayed by television, from the images of armed riot police clashing with workers and student protesters to the images of U.S. military aggression in Vietnam, of the civil rights movement, and of the spread of decolonization struggles in Latin America and Africa. This was also the decade that witnessed the most air hijackings, seajackings, and other direct-action tactics carried out by media-conscious militant activists. It was within this general atmosphere of media saturation that Kim Hiro staged his hostage crisis, the Yodogo hijackers stole the Japan Airline's flight 351 and defected to North Korea, and Mishima Yukio staged his failed coup d'état and performed his ritual suicide. Like Oshima and Matsumoto Toshio, avant-garde filmmakers who frequently appropriated high-profile media events in the 1960s, Wakamatsu was quick to incorporate these sensational news items into his films often with the help of Adachi's clever scripts.

In the course of this decade the process of consuming violence through the mediation of spectacular images and imaging politics through violence became thoroughly imbricated. The mass media greatly contributed to the state's management of the public's perception of politics. Japanese media had historically engaged in institutionalized activities of regulating, censoring, and soliciting news consumption, which contributed to the production of a dis-

ciplined, productive population during the wartime period and the Occupation period. The postwar growth of the private sector of the journalism industry seemed to liberate the news media from the grip of the state, but arguably it developed a much subtler yet equally effective means of policing the population. The news media under the regime of liberal governance in postwar Japan operated with the principle of democratization, but the power of the media to shape, manage, and delimit the perceived definition of politics stayed firmly in place. The introduction of television in the 1950s not only reinforced this power, but also amplified its reliance on the rhetorical force of liberalism and consensual democracy. This confluence of the postwar democratization of the media and liberal governance at the height of Japan's economic growth forms the historical background for Wakamatsu's incessant appropriation of news media. Understood in this context, his appropriation of widely reported incidents such as the Yodogo air hijacking and Mishima's coup attempt—actions that directly affronted the security and authority of the state—in *Sex Jack* and *Sexual Reincarnation* appears as more than a timely citation of the sensational news. For the media's dissemination of these incidents as defining images of political violence and criminal action works together with a broader mechanism of policing, which operates within and without the institutionalized apparatuses of law and order.

To return to the point I made earlier, then, it is not enough to simply attribute the actuality-effect of Wakamatsu's films to the generic structure of the Pink Film. Rather, the strategy of remediation and the temporal proximity to journalism present in Wakamatsu's work need to also be placed within this larger historical context of the intensified mediatization of political violence in the 1960s. Only then can we fully understand the particular intervention his work makes in the parallel economies of narrative cinema and journalism.

If Wakamatsu's engagement with journalism goes beyond a mere sensationalist appropriation of topical news, and if it is historically grounded in the era of an intensified mediatization of political violence, how might we understand its significance? One way to answer this question is to step back and think about the kind of political actions made visible through Wakamatsu's citational use of journalistic materials. In order to analyze this point, I want to turn to the theoretical distinction between police and politics made by Jacques Rancière.²⁵ Following Michel Foucault's work on the historical

development of the modern police, Rancière makes a useful distinction between two ways of understanding politics; he separates what he calls the general order of “police” from the genuine acts of “politics”, reserving the latter term to denote a broader range of activities that contest, disrupt, and question the very conditions of possibility that undergird the perceived social, economic, and legal orders in society, including the ostensibly democratic ones. Rancière hence uses the term *policing*—not *politics*—to refer to what commonly goes by the name of politics: the institutionalized activities of governance, regulation, and the exercise of power including the system of electoral politics: “Politics is generally seen as the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems of legitimizing this distribution. I propose to give this system of distribution and legitimization another name. I propose to call it *the police*.”²⁶

Accordingly, his concept of the police significantly expands the narrow understanding of the police as an agent of law enforcement, surveillance, and legally sanctioned violence. What he calls “the police order” is a more general regulatory order of sense perception, of which the institutional apparatus of the police as the agency of law enforcement is just one element: “The police is thus first an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying, and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task; it is an order of the visible and the sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise.”²⁷

In contrast, what Rancière calls *politics* refers to activities that upset this regulatory police ordering of the sensible and the exclusionary distribution of social roles and bodies in society.²⁸ Against this regulatory order of the police that predetermines what one can see, say, and do, as well as who can speak for a given political community, Rancière defines what he calls politics in the following manner: “Political activity is whatever shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes a place’s destination. It makes visible what had no business being seen, and makes heard a discourse where there was only place for noise.”²⁹ In so doing, such political activity can expose the structure of inequality, which is constitutive of democratic society and at odds with the supposed equality among its members.



Figure 17: Wakamatsu combines riot police and protesters in the opening montage sequence of *Running in Madness, Dying in Love* (*Kyosojoshiko*, 1969).

Wakamatsu's timely appropriation of media events, such as the Yodogo Incident, could be productively understood in relation to this gap that exists between the police order and political activity. Instead of focusing on political actions that appear obvious and self-evident, Wakamatsu often shifts his emphasis onto a more ambiguous element. For instance, how might we read the film's final staging of the protagonist's river crossing in *Sex Jack*? This act might be read as an attempt to dislocate and redistribute bodies from their assigned places in society rather than as a simple act of defiance against the state. The protagonist's act of crossing the river is at once a physical and symbolic gesture that exposes the benign violence enacted by the democratic society. That is, the violence, which allocates his body "on the other side of the river," the marginalized space of minorities whose presence is concealed from the public and whose voices are not heard by elected politicians and activists who speak in their name.

What the film makes visible through its engagement with sexual and political violence is the uncomfortable truth that *these leftist student activists are on the side of the police* in Rancière's sense of the term. Their critique of the state and capitalism notwithstanding, the student activists in *Sex Jack* are in fact complicit with the dominant police order that forecloses the participation of those who have no political voice in representational politics, and who are excluded from the media's theatrical staging of political dissent. The protagonist's refusal to participate in the consensual model of democracy presented in the student activists' rhetoric of free sex is emblematic in this regard. While hiding inside the dilapidated apartment of the protagonist, the stu-

dents pass their idle time by debating the merits of revolutionary violence, complaining about the apathy of workers, and engaging in group sex, which they call “rosy solidarity” (*barairo no rentai*). This campy caricature of solidarity depicted in the form of a run-of-the-mill, pornographic scene is suggestive; it discloses the policing power of their political vision.

The policing power of the students over the protagonist is foregrounded through this seemingly democratic rhetoric of free sex, as they invite and then pressure the protagonist to engage in the act of rosy solidarity. The camera work in this sequence drives the point home. Taking a high-angle position, the camera looks on the contorted face of the protagonist who helplessly screams as he is held and stripped of his clothes. His refusal to participate in this erotic game of solidarity is interpreted diegetically as a pathetic gesture of cowardice and impotence. But if we were to understand the police order as consisting of “the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved,” then this scene works as a critique of this very police order, which works through a depoliticized system of consensus and in the name of liberal democracy.³⁰ Read in this allegorical manner, the film *Sex Jack* reveals a much deeper ambivalence towards New Left student activism than it may first appear.

This kind of ambivalence that reveals the contradictory alliance between the police order and leftist politics is what makes Wakamatsu’s work from the 1960s and early 1970s particularly interesting. His work is commonly interpreted as either regressively pornographic or progressively radical, and the political stance of his filmmaking from this period is predictably aligned with the New Left and with its stance of the anti-establishment.³¹ As noted by film historian Hirasawa Go, the participation of young collaborators such as Adachi Masao in Wakamatsu Production helped ground Wakamatsu’s personal hatred of police officers in a more theoretical framework of the critique of the state.³² Wakamatsu also invited and hired former student revolutionaries and New Left activists into the production team. However, films like *Sex Jack* suggest that the question of politics in his work is much more ambivalent and even contradictory. If so, what does the textual ambivalence of Wakamatsu’s films tell us about cinema’s proximity to journalism? In order to answer this question, the next section will look more closely at the types of journalistic material appropriated by Wakamatsu.

Appropriating the Spectacle

The textual ambivalence of Wakamatsu's films begs the question of cinema's complicity with the existing police order that codifies our perception of political violence. Wakamatsu directly cites and remediates topical materials circulating in the journalistic economy of information, and the information appropriated by him is often quite spectacular. In so doing, his films tread a fine line between self-serving publicity and critique. By referencing then current news and media events, his work gains much needed publicity as it piggybacks on the sensational values of these events. Yet, at the same time, films like *Sex Jack* and *Sexual Reincarnation* also draw attention to the policing power of journalistic media through their calculated remediation of news. It is the *delayed* repetition of the already consumed spectacles of sensational events that opens up a productive space of critique, even as it capitalizes on their value as publicity.

Exemplary in this regard are the montage sequences in *Sexual Reincarnation*, which remediate news reports and press photographs concerning Mishima's attempted coup and his suicide in close-ups. Noteworthy here is the fact the purported "political" nature of this news is aligned with the ultra-right nationalist wing of militant activism. When read together with films like *Sex Jack*, *Season of Terror*, and *Ecstasy of Angels*, which explicitly deal with the militancy of the New Left activists, Wakamatsu's handling of journalistic materials in *Sexual Reincarnation* reveals a formal consistency; regardless of the ideological orientation all the news pertaining to the political activism of the Left *and* the Right are formally presented in the same manner. The direct remediation of headlines and photographs published in newspapers, magazines and print advertisements as well as the audio sampling of radio and television news are recurrent formal techniques used in many of his films. This indiscriminate treatment of journalistic information pertaining to the political activism of this period suggests that the policing function of media-tization is not wedded to any particular ideological orientation. This is a process that undermines the purported difference between the Left and the Right as it homogenizes the spectacular images of staged dissent and resistance into palatable commodities. The attempted coup by the Right and the attempted revolutionary uprising by the Left become equivalent as information; their images become exchangeable as they circulate in the media. It is this leveling force of commodification that undergirds the smooth flow of

the journalistic economy of the image. However, when the same news is appropriated by cinema, it interrupts the flow of information. By creating redundancy, the cinematic repetition of the news draws attention to the policing nature of the spectacle itself.

Some of the films made by Wakamatsu in the late 1960s appropriate topical news and sensational media events, though the main narrative does not directly reference either the New Left student movement or the right-wing political activism. For instance, the film *Violated Angels*—invited to the Cannes International Film Festival along with *Sex Jack*—draws on the famous mass killing of student nurses by Richard Speck in Chicago in 1966, an incident that received much news coverage during his trial the following year.³³ Wakamatsu produced the film with his own funds in 1967, and invited Kara Juro, the founder of the underground theater troupe, Situation Theater to perform the lead role. The decidedly non-Pink status of the film may account for the experimental look of the work. However, its handling of journalistic materials is still consistent with his other films from this period.

As in *Sexual Reincarnation*, the film *Violated Angels* includes eye-catching montage sequences composed of still images extracted from newspapers and magazines, though this time these images are not directly linked to the original incident involving Speck on which the narrative is based. More precisely, the film opens with a montage sequence that mixes erotic photographs of women taken from pornographic magazines with still photographs of Kara. The film closes with another striking montage sequence, which alternates a freeze-frame shot of two policemen with raised truncheons with a series of remediated images from newspapers and weekly magazines, many of which reference then current news about the massive student protests against the Vietnam War. The formal structure of the opening and the closing sequences suggest two things: first, the sensational crime of Richard Speck is syntagmatically linked to pornography on the one hand and to political activism on the other; and second, pornography and political activism are rendered equivalent to one another insofar as they circulate as commodities in the economy of journalism.

Scholars of Japanese cinema have failed to analyze the connection between the film's timely appropriation of the crime of Richard Speck and the wider journalistic economy of news. In his discussion of *Violated Angels*, for instance, Noël Burch makes a cursory comment on these montage sequences

and the journalistic sensibility of Wakamatsu: “The film was inspired by the notorious massacre of the ‘Chicago nurses’ and is said to have been shot within a week of that horrendous event. Actual, recent events have often provided the raw material for Wakamatsu’s fantasies, as they did for Adachi Masao, his new script-writer, who was to influence the new direction of his work.”³⁴ While Burch’s observation about Wakamatsu and Adachi’s appropriation of “actual, recent events” is correct, his analysis of the film misses its critical intervention into the journalistic economy of the image. Burch hastily concludes that the film creates a “mechanical association of unbridled sexual fulfillment with revolutionary politics, an association which characterizes not only much independent film-work, but also the ideology of certain ultra-Leftist groups in Japan.”³⁵

But, as we saw in *Sex Jack* and *Sexual Reincarnation*, it is precisely such a mechanical association between sex and revolutionary politics that Wakamatsu’s work leads us to question. If sex and revolutionary politics are associated, it is because the news media have already transformed both into spectacles of equivalent value. Moreover, Burch’s interpretation of the opening and closing montage sequences overly psychologizes their significance. He argues that the “two essentially extra-diegetic sequences [are] meant to ground the hero’s psychosis in social reality, to designate it as emblematic of social and political repression and revolt.”³⁶ Burch remains skeptical of the film’s purported distancing effects, and notes that it simply draws a homology between “sexual alienation” and “the economic, political and ideological alienation” endemic in capitalist society. However, this reductive reading obscures the crucial difference between the police order and politics proper that Rancière articulates. Politics in Burch is reduced to a one-dimensional sphere of repression, alienation, and senseless revolt.

Burch also posits sex and politics as categorically different elements—as if one is “private” and the other is “public”—and the connection between the two is assumed to reside in the classical Marxist framework of alienation. Yet, if we were to consider the mediatization of political activism that blurs the boundary between the Left and the Right, such a simple analogy between sex and politics based on the concept of alienation does not hold. At stake in *Violated Angels*, as well as other films made by Wakamatsu in the 1960s and early 1970s, is the policing *effect* of this mediatization itself, which renders political activism and sex as equivalents at the level of spectacle. Once they

enter into the journalistic economy of the image, spectacles of politics and sex equally command the attention of the consumers. Understood in this manner, the relation between the pornographic photographs used in the opening montage sequence and the still images of policemen and student protests in the closing montage sequence becomes clear; this is the relation of exchangeability. By formally treating sex and politics as exchangeable spectacles, *Violated Angels* also directs our attention to the mediating role of journalism. This is done through the timely remediation of sensational images extracted from the newspapers and magazines. What becomes visible through this process is the power of journalistic media to flatten the difference between different types of spectacles in accordance with the commodity logic of exchangeability.

Another film that directly references a violent crime is *Go, Go, Second Time Virgin* made in 1969, two years after *Violated Angels*. Stylistically, this film closely resembles *Sexual Reincarnation* in its use of a rapid montage sequence that flashes across the screen without a clear narrative motivation. As in the case of *Sexual Reincarnation*, this sequence parades shocking images concerning the murder of the American actress Sharon Tate by the followers of Charles Manson in 1969. The news reports and press photographs about Tate's murder alternate with comic book images that graphically depict scenes of death and violence. In his analysis of *Go, Go, Second Time Virgin*, Desser also comments on the film's citational strategy. Like Burch, he too focuses on the narrative effect of this sequence and reduces it to character psychology: "As in *Violated Women* [*Violated Angels*], Wakamatsu shows still images drawn from commercial exploitation forms, except in this later film, he shows them at the end, forcing a kind of retrospective understanding of the hero's motivations."³⁷ However, explaining this sudden intrusion of non-diegetic journalistic materials through the framework of the character's motivation misses the point. The graphic violence in this montage sequence functions in the same way as the opening and closing montage sequences in *Violated Angels*. They guide the spectator's attention to the journalistic production of spectacles that equates crime, sex, and politics, which then circulate as information commodities. In so doing, these montage sequences put the cinematic remediation of these journalistic materials in quotation marks, as it were.

In order to better understand the efficacy of this citational gesture, we may note the temporal proximity between the original news and its reappearance in the film. As with *Sexual Reincarnation* and Mishima's infamous spectacle, the time lag between the release date of *Go, Go, Second Time Virgin* and the date of Sharon Tate's murder is quite small. One month after the news of Tate's murder, the film was already playing in theaters. Citational practice of remediation in relation to the speed of the journalistic economy of information, especially news, bears further investigation here. Remediation presupposes repetition, and the cinematic repetition of journalistic information implies its belatedness. This belatedness of repetition suggests a critical gap between journalism and cinema; it is this gap or the time lag that interrupts an otherwise smooth flow of news as information. The lag is short enough for the film's citational gesture to appear timely and actual, but long enough to prove that the temporality of the two economies of the image is not exactly the same. It is this temporal element of *proximity*—very close, but not simultaneous—that heightens the spectator's awareness of the marked difference between the journalistic economy of the image and the cinematic economy of the image.

Two months after the release of *Go, Go, Second Time Virgin*, Wakamatsu released yet another film, *Season of Terror*, which again opens with a memorable montage composed of remediated press photographs and newspaper headlines. The sequence begins with an enlarged snapshot of riot police clashing with demonstrating students. The rough, grainy texture of the image and the vertical lines running across it suggest that the photograph is printed on inexpensive newsprint. The film cuts to a partial image of a newspaper headline and an accompanying photograph of a burning building. The montage proceeds to other stills, which include more images of the riot police, mass protests, arrests of demonstrators, and the military training session of a right-wing group. Meanwhile, the fragments of headlines report on the record-breaking number of student arrests, riots, and inter-factional conflicts among the militant New Left students. Although the sequence itself is composed of still images, the use of fast fade-in and fade-out adds an optical rhythm, generating a subtle impression of movement.

However, as if to remind the spectator of the status of this sequence as citation, the sequence ends with a cut to a shot in which a magazine featuring a right-wing nationalist group on its front cover is thrown down on the table

by an invisible hand. The film then cuts to a long shot of a housing complex and the fictional narrative of the New Left activist finally begins.³⁸ The artifactual effect of this sequence seems to be the same as the ones discussed earlier. It indicates that the images of political activism presented in the film are crucially inflected through the mediation of journalism, which the film belatedly cites. But this citation is neither faithful nor simultaneous: the fact of repetition renders it different and threatens to undermine the legitimacy of the original.

Taken as a whole, Wakamatsu's films from the 1960s and early 1970s consistently play with this temporal lag between the journalistic production of information and the cinematic reproduction of it. In so doing, they draw attention to the artifactual nature of the information and the spectacularity of political activism, sex, and crime when mediated by journalism. The recurrent motifs of political activism, sex, and crime in his work are also deeply implicated in the differing economic structures of attention management in cinema and journalism. The cinematic production of spectacle is inseparable from the economic management of attention. As Jean-François Lyotard notes, the management of attention in cinema is doubly economic as it attempts to secure a financial return by imposing the good order (in a sense of *oikonomia*), channeling the libidinal investment of the spectator into the narrative order through the staging of the *mise-en-scène* and the calculated processes of editing and framing.³⁹ Moreover, the effective orientation of the spectator's attention often works through the combination of stillness and movement, and thus the commanding power of the spectacle in cinema often takes advantage of the freeze-frame. As Mulvey and others have noted, the attention-commanding power of the cinematic spectacle is especially heightened when the image remains still and thus halts the flow of the moving image.⁴⁰ Something similar happens with the deliberate mixing of the journalistic economy of the image and the cinematic economy of the image. Wakamatsu's calculated remediation of already spectacularized images of sexual and political violence, such as Tate's murder, the anti-Vietnam war protests, and the Yodogo Hijacking Incident, halts the flow of the journalistic economy, reorients its direction, and commands critical attention from the spectator as it plays up the temporal gap between these two modes of image consumption and circulation. In so doing, it suggests that the temporal structures of cinema and journalism are not the same. This brings me to the final point of my analysis: the issue of expiration.

Cinema and the Logic of Expiration

With this issue of expiration, we are back to the question of journalistic actuality, which requires us to rethink this concept of actuality in relation to the temporal attributes of news. As we saw earlier, Wakamatsu's well-timed appropriation of high-profile media events and sensational crime news is marked by the belatedness of their repetition. This idea of belatedness deserves scrutiny if we are to fully understand the temporal difference between the cinematic and journalistic economies of the image. As Tosaka reminds us, "A news report stops being news if it loses its current relevance."⁴¹ The concept of journalism, which etymologically suggests a link to the cyclical concept of the diurnal (*diurnalis* in Latin), is inseparable from this temporal attribute of being current or existing now; this attribute is what he calls "actuality."⁴² As is often noted, journalistic information loses its value as time passes; the actuality of news quickly becomes obsolete. The value of information so central to journalism is time-sensitive. This temporally bound value of information in the journalistic economy has been repeatedly pointed out by scholars such as Walter Benjamin, Mary Ann Doane, and Niklas Luhmann, to name a few. To repeat Benjamin: "The value of information does not survive the moment in which it was new."⁴³ What defines the obsolescence of journalistic information is, in short, its status of being out-of-date. Conversely, the temporal attribute of actuality that defines journalism is threatened by its *expirability*; the inevitability—and threat—of expiration is constitutive of journalistic actuality. Journalistic actuality is thus defined by this capacity to expire, and it operates in a particular mode of temporality punctuated by the cyclical rhythm of news production. This is why the notion of actuality is opposed to the notion of eternity.⁴⁴ The logic of expiration that structures the production of news and the expirable nature of actuality define the temporal economy of journalism.

Yet, a third element also defines this temporally bound economy of journalistic information. This is *non-redundancy*. According to Luhmann: "Information cannot be repeated; as soon as it becomes an event, it becomes non-information. A news item run twice might still have its meaning, but it loses its information value."⁴⁵ In other words, repetition is detrimental to the "actual" value of the journalistic information, as it creates redundancy. If we take this point seriously, the time lag that Wakamatsu introduces between the cinematic and journalistic economies of the image through his citation and

remediation of news gains new significance. The repetition opens up a critical interval between journalistic actuality and cinematic actuality, and this interval allows the viewer to distinguish between information and citation. Coming out of the Pink Film industry, which capitalizes on a fast cycle of production, Wakamatsu's work seems to align itself with the journalistic economy of the image. Yet his work is also counterproductive to journalism, as the sensational news quoted and repeated by his films loses its information value as news. Accordingly, we may surmise that the dissemination of newsworthy information is neither the goal nor the intended effect of his remediation strategy. On the contrary, the divestment of information value seems to go hand in hand with the investment in something properly cinematic.

Here, Wakamatsu's work urges us to consider another important historical shift that took place concurrently with the mediatization of politics: the changing perception of cinema by the general public. Cinema changed from being a temporally bound commodity stamped with a short expiration date to being a timeless work of art worthy of being archived and appreciated time and again. Japan in the 1960s witnessed the dramatic decline of the major studios, which in turn helped small independent film productions to thrive and alternative modes of distribution and exhibition to flourish. The complementary developments of the Pink Film and art cinema (which is exemplified by the establishment of ATG, which specialized in the distribution, exhibition and production of art films) indicate the changing configuration of the Japanese film industry at the time.

Wakamatsu's work straddles these two fields of filmmaking, which diverge significantly in terms of their temporal logics. The turnover time of the Pink Film market critically differs from that of the art cinema market. While the fast-and-cheap production and exhibition cycle of the Pink Film in the 1960s maintained the journalistic speed of the so-called program pictures, the production and exhibition cycle of art films did not follow the weekly cycle of the program picture. In this regard the establishment of ATG, in 1961, was groundbreaking, as it clearly set the non-journalistic pace of production, distribution, and exhibition.

In addition to fostering close interactions among avant-garde and more commercially oriented filmmakers, ATG made a particularly noteworthy contribution to the transformation of the cinematic economy of the image. It revolutionized the exhibition cycle, adopting the so-called long-run screening



Figure 18: Mishima and his Shield Society stage ritual sex before the decisive day in fantasy sequences from *Sexual Reincarnation*.

style. As Roland Domenig points out, “One of ATG’s basic rules was to show each film for at least a month, irrespective of attendance. In the 1960s, the repertoire was usually changed weekly, and a four-week run was exceptional even for box-office hits.”⁴⁶ ATG thus deviated and broke free from the previously dominant temporality of the cinematic economy of the image grounded in the weekly cycle. This dramatic shift in the exhibition cycle was significant, since it freed cinema from the structure of periodicity that the system of the program picture established and maintained during the 1950s.

It is here that our earlier examination of the journalistic logic of expiration becomes relevant. The Japanese film industry in the 1950s produced films that were branded with an expiration date. Films as commodities had to be consumed—much like news—within a particular time span and according to a periodic cycle. Cinema had a parallel temporal economy to journalism during the 1950s when the system of the program picture was upholding the industry, insofar as the cinema, like journalism, was based around a cycle of expiration. Arguably, however, the temporal distance between cinema and journalism became greater in the 1960s, when independent production companies and avant-garde filmmakers started to generate an alternative circuit of production, distribution, and exhibition.

In this regard it is suggestive that in 1961 Oshima published an essay entitled “A Challenge to Vulgar Beliefs about Cinema,” an essay in which he protests the general public’s perception of cinema as a commodity “that dis-



Figure 19: Mishima stages his own fantasy sex before committing ritual suicide in his experimental film entitled *Patriotism*.

appears in a week or two.” He squarely contests a conception of film as a journalistic commodity branded with an expiration date.

Japan is now finally entering the era of big budget, long run filmmaking. This reflects a logical demand of the time, since we are finally realizing that a film cannot entertain without aspiring to be an artwork, a quality without which cinema cannot compete against other forms of entertainment. Accordingly, a work of film that attains this artistic quality does not lose its value after a short period of time, which is why it generates a demand for the long run exhibition of great films.⁴⁷

Oshima presses his point that the vulgar conception of cinema as a mere commodity needs to be abandoned if cinema were to survive its competition with television. Oshima’s affirmation of cinema’s artistic value over its journalistic value is an argument for its timeless quality over its exirability. It is precisely this shift from being an *expirable* commodity to being a *timeless* art-

work that marks the cinema's liberation from its subordination to the temporal economy of journalism.

As if to echo Oshima's sentiment, Wakamatsu argues that the filmmaker is always responsible for his work, and that "there is no statute of limitations or parole for a filmmaker."⁴⁸ As the legal metaphor of the statute of limitations suggests, Wakamatsu's positioning of cinema as something timeless foregrounds not its artistic merits, but the responsibility of the filmmaker for his work. Yet, both Oshima and Wakamatsu share the belief that the temporality of cinema must be distinguished from that of journalism; it is not dictated by the logic of expiration. Wakamatsu's cinematic experiments of the 1960s must be analyzed in relation to this changing conception of cinema's *own* temporality and its economy of the image, which are no longer subordinated to and modeled after journalism. Crucial here, once again, is the difference between the two types of image economies that Wakamatsu's films make visible.

In conclusion, it would be instructive to return to *Sexual Reincarnation*, a film which openly parodies the Mishima Incident. This film directly draws on the most sensational aspects of Mishima's failed coup attempt and suicide, by remediating numerous photographs of Mishima clad in the uniform of his private army and even his handwritten death poems. Importantly, *Sexual Reincarnation* parodies not only the media event that occurred on November 25, 1970, but also Mishima's film *Patriotism*. This reference to *Patriotism* is made explicit by the character traits of the protagonist, a right-wing nationalist and member of Mishima's private army who was described as having failed to participate in Mishima's actual coup attempt. Furthermore, not only does Wakamatsu replicate the whole setup of the young man who misses the historic opportunity to participate in a coup d'état, but he also appropriates Mishima's own appropriation, in *Patriotism*, of an actual historic event, the famous February 26 Incident. This incident, which took place in 1936, also was a failed coup, carried out by young ultranationalist officers of the Imperial Japanese Army who revolted against the government in the name of their loyalty to the emperor. Several top cabinet members were assassinated and martial law was declared, putting Japan under a state of emergency. In the end the Emperor refused to support the insurrection, just as the soldiers of the Self-Defense Forces refused to respond to Mishima's anachronistic vision of restructuring Japan.

Key to this layering of references is the *untimeliness* of the action taken by those who envision revolutionary change. The trope of failure to participate in major revolutionary actions, a point made by both *Patriotism* and *Sexual Reincarnation*, is bound to the untimely nature of actual insurrections that failed to make history. In this regard Mishima's deliberate staging of his coup attempt as a media event appears self-conscious. He orchestrated this historic event for the camera, called the *Mainichi* newspaper and NHK television reporters, and thus anticipated *timely* responses from journalists.⁴⁹ The media indeed responded to this call for timely coverage and collaborated with Mishima to stage his final act, a political spectacle that clearly echoed and imitated the fictional ending of the spectacular suicide in *Patriotism*. Nonetheless, Mishima failed to realize his attempted coup d'état.

What *Sexual Reincarnation* parodies, then, is not simply the Mishima Incident of November 25, 1970, but the mediatization of politics in which journalists and revolutionaries equally participate. Even the unlikely choice of classical music used by Wakamatsu in *Sexual Reincarnation* is a reference to Mishima's film *Patriotism*, which uses the score of Wagner's magnanimous opera, *Tristan und Isolde*. By remediating the journalistic coverage of Mishima's coup attempt and his subsequent suicide, and by appropriating Mishima's fictional work that prefigured these actions, *Sexual Reincarnation* exposes the fundamentally theatrical—and artifactual—nature of actuality staged for and through the media.

Through its layered reference to the artifactual nature of the Mishima Incident, *Sexual Reincarnation* also directs our attention to the ironic gap between the untimeliness of revolutionary acts and the timeliness of journalistic reports. As we saw in this chapter, Wakamatsu's work competes with the journalistic economy of information and the image, but never coincides with it. This element of belatedness that marks his work, which relentlessly cites, parodies, and remediates sensational news and media events, allows us to see the critical difference between the temporal economies of journalism and cinema. While Wakamatsu's films display the generic traits of the Pink Film and may appear to stand apart from more straightforwardly experimental works of filmmakers such as Matsumoto Toshio and Oshima Nagisa, their work shares something fundamentally similar: a critical attitude towards the proximity between cinema and journalism. Wakamatsu's work constantly evokes and plays with an intersection between the two modes of the image

economy. In so doing, it draws our attention to the critical potential of cinema to interrupt the smooth flow of the journalistic economy. This calculated intervention into the journalistic economy of the image during the height of the intensifying mediatization of politics in the late 1960s and early 1970s is what makes Wakamatsu's films so provocative, insofar as they complicate the presumed alliance between political activism and the cinema of actuality.

NOTES

¹ Wakamatsu, *Wakamatsu Koji: Ore wa te o yogosu*, 116.

² Because of their close association and the importance of Adachi and other Wakamatsu Productions members I will refer in this essay not solely to Wakamatsu alone but instead Wakamatsu Productions as the collective agents responsible for the production of these films.

³ Wakamatsu, *Wakamatsu Koji: Ore wa te o yogosu*, 116.

⁴ Hiraoka, *Angura kikanseisu*, 135. This essay was originally published in a publicity brochure for the film *Sexual Reincarnation* and was subsequently anthologized in Hiraoka's *Umi o miteita Zatouichi*. While the temporality of the film and the weekly magazine may be *comparable* they are not the *same*. There is a gap in the temporality between the two, and this gap is precisely where the politics of Wakamatsu's filmic repetitions of media events reside.

⁵ "Kinkyu daitokushu," 20-21.

⁶ Wakamatsu, *Wakamatsu Koji: Ore wa te o yogosu*, 116. There is a conflicting account. The film is sometimes credited as being released in 1971, but Wakamatsu notes that it was shown in December.

⁷ Richie, "The Japanese Eroduction," 334 in this volume.

⁸ Hayashi, "The Fantastic Trajectory of Pink Art Cinema From Stalin to Bush," 48.

⁹ Suzuki, *Pinku eiga suikoden*, 12.

¹⁰ Schaefer, "*Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!*," 108-9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

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- ¹² Suzuki, *Pink eiga suikoden*, 35. This is why Kobayashi's *Market of Flesh*, which was produced and distributed by Okura Mitsugu, a former *benshi* and the founder of the Okura Eiga studio, qualifies as the first Pink Film. Established in 1961, Okura Eiga began specializing in the production and distribution of Pink Film and continues to specialize in pornography today. Murai may have also borrowed the term "Pink" from its usage in the United States. According to Schaefer, "The adults-only designation, also known as 'pinking' after the color of the Chicago permit that forbade the admission of children to a film," was already used in the United States before World War II ("*Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!*," 124).
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 4. Eirin, short for Eiga rinri kitei kanri iinkai (Film Ethics Regulation Control Committee), was founded by the film industry personnel in 1949 during the Occupation. In 1956 the committee extricated itself from the industry, and established the self-regulatory rating system run by a third party. It changed its name from Eiga Rinri Kanri Iinkai to Eiga Rinri Iinkai (which is now translated as Film Classification and Rating Committee) in 2009.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 15. Like the exploitation film, the Pink Film is also differentiated from hardcore pornography.
- ¹⁵ Suzuki, *Pinku eiga suikoden*, 26.
- ¹⁶ Oshima, "Wakamatsu Koji: Sabetsu to satsuriku," 104. The term Oshima uses is *onigo* ("demon child"), which indicates a lack of resemblance between the parent and the child. In order to get the nuance across, I have translated it as "bastard child."
- ¹⁷ Wakamatsu also brought another film, *Violated Angels* (*Okasareta byakui*, 1967), to the Cannes International Film Festival in 1971. These two films were invited to Cannes, together with Oshima's *The Ceremony* (*Gishiki*, 1971).
- ¹⁸ The manga version of *Tomorrow's Joe* was serialized in the weekly magazine *Shukan shonen magazine*, from 1968 to 1973. While the Yodogo Incident was unfolding, the TV anime version of the work went on the air.
- ¹⁹ Oshima, "Wakamatsu Koji: Sabetsu to satsuriku," 105.
- ²⁰ Matsuda, *Fukei no shimetsu*, 201.
- ²¹ Saito, "Adachi eiga to feminizumu," 165.
- ²² Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."
- ²³ Hayashi, "Shikyu e no kaiki," 97.

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- ²⁴ While this is a phrase that Linda Williams uses to analyze Oshima's *In the Realm of the Senses*, the questions of perversion and sadomasochism that she raises in reading this film are, arguably, equally applicable to some of Wakamatsu's films. See Williams, *Hard Core*, 222.
- ²⁵ Rancière, *Disagreement*, 28. Rancière also invited Wakamatsu to the conference, *Où va le cinéma?: Cinéma et politique*, held at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2008. Due to a strike at the Centre Pompidou, Wakamatsu was, in the end, not able to attend. I thank Hirasawa Go for informing me of this event.
- ²⁶ Rancière, *Disagreement*, 28.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.
- ²⁸ Rancière plays on the double connotation of the French word *partage* ("distribution" or "partition"), which suggests an act of division as well as the sharing of something in common. This concept of *partage* relates to his concern with equality and his critique of consensus. He writes, for instance, "I call the distribution of the sensible [*le partage du sensible*] the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it. A distribution of the sensible therefore establishes at one and the same time something common that is shared and exclusive parts" (Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 12). With regard to this ambivalent concept of partition or distribution (*partage*), Étienne Balibar's following observation about the difference between the police and politics in Rancière's work is useful: "Policing, in general, is a matter of demands; it seeks to give everyone a fair share in the distribution of the common good, by authoritarian or contractual procedures. Democratic politics, in contrast, has as its unique criterion the 'share of the shareless': that is, the requirement of equality set off *against* social identity or personal merit." See Étienne Balibar, "What Is Political Philosophy?" 101.
- ²⁹ Rancière, *Disagreement*, 30.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.
- ³¹ Wakamatsu's antipathy towards the police is directly linked to his personal experience of being imprisoned for a petty crime. He notes, "I wanted to take revenge against the police by killing many policemen in my films." Yomota Inuhiko and Hirasawa Go, "Wakamatsu Koji intabyu," 176. My translation.
- ³² Hirasawa Go, "Radikarizumu no keizoku," 159.

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- ³³ *Violated Angels* is not the only film to reference this infamous murder case. The German film, *Naked Massacre* (*Die Hinrichtung*, aka *Born for Hell*, 1976) directed by Denis Héroux is based on the same incident. Gerhard Richter, a German painter and visual artist known for his artistic remediation of sensational news materials, also produced *Eight Student Nurses* (1966), a painting based on the portrait photos of eight nurses killed by Richard Speck.
- ³⁴ Burch, *To the Distant Observer*, 352.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 354.
- ³⁷ Desser, *Eros Plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema*, 104.
- ³⁸ To this list of films that make direct references to the news media, especially newspapers, we may also add Wakamatsu's most controversial film, *Secrets Behind the Wall* (*Kabe no naka no himegoto*, 1965), which was invited to the Berlin Film Festival and was denounced as a "national disgrace" (*kokujoku*) by Eirin. This film also makes ample use of journalistic materials and includes numerous close-ups of actual newspapers and magazine headlines, which suggests that the news was still current at the time of the film's release.
- ³⁹ See Lyotard, "Acinema," 349-359. See also Crary, "Spectacle, Attention, Counter-Memory," 96-107.
- ⁴⁰ Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second*, 186. For an insightful discussion of cinema, attention and economy, see Beller, *The Cinematic Mode of Production*, (2006).
- ⁴¹ Tosaka Jun, *Tosaka Jun zenshu* 3, 133.
- ⁴² The German word Tosaka frequently uses is *Aktualität*.
- ⁴³ Benjamin, "The Storyteller," 251-64; Luhmann, *The Reality of The Mass Media*.
- ⁴⁴ Tosaka, "Ideorogii gairon," 122.
- ⁴⁵ Luhmann, *The Reality of the Mass Media*, 19.
- ⁴⁶ Domenig, "A Brief History of Independent Cinema in Japan and the Role of the Art Theatre Guild," 11.
- ⁴⁷ Oshima, "Eiga zokusetsu he no chosen," 80. This essay was originally published in the magazine *Gendai no me* in 1961. My translation.
- ⁴⁸ Wakamatsu Koji, *Jiko nashi*, 202.
- ⁴⁹ DNA Media, "Mishima Yukio no shi wa, toji do ronhyo sareta ka," 19.

THE ACTUALITY OF WAKAMATSU



Pink Pictures

Tsuda Ichiro

In 1980, photographer Tsuda Ichiro published *The Location* (*Za rokeshon*, Tsuda can be seen covered with cameras on the facing page), a collection of anecdotes and B&W photographs taken while working as a publicity photographer on the set of Pink Film productions. With documentary images of the cast, crew, and settings in front of the camera, Tsuda's popular book provided an insider's perspective on a Pink Film world that was inaccessible to most viewers and consumers. The book was so popular Shochiku adapted it into a feature film comedy directed by Morisaki Azuma: *The Location* (*Rokeshon*, 1984). Here Tsuda presents a selection from his book, as well as some never-before-seen photographs.

While the fragmented narratives created by Tsuda pointed towards a pro-filmic referent beyond the artifice of this melodramatic body genre, it also highlighted the representational quandaries of a non-explicit "body genre" (that is nonetheless intended to titillate and fascinate) as well as the limits of realism in Tsuda's own images. In Chapter 11, Michael Arnold frames Tsuda's collection of pictures as a valuable catalyst for addressing the realism of the pornographic image in Japanese cinema and examining the material and historical conditions of Pink Film production itself. Being a record of a production culture featuring mostly anonymous film workers and long forgotten films, we present them here without captions.

Born in Hokkaido, Tsuda studied economics at Chuo University. He began his photography career at a PR company in the mid-1960s, before going independent. While he works in a wide variety of genres, he is well-known as a chronicler of the Pink world. Tsuda has shot stills, posters and video packaging for Pink Films, and now AV, to the present day. His work has been recognized with the prestigious Ina Nobuo and Domon Ken awards. A founding member of the Japan Photographers Association, he currently serves as its president.



PINK PICTURES













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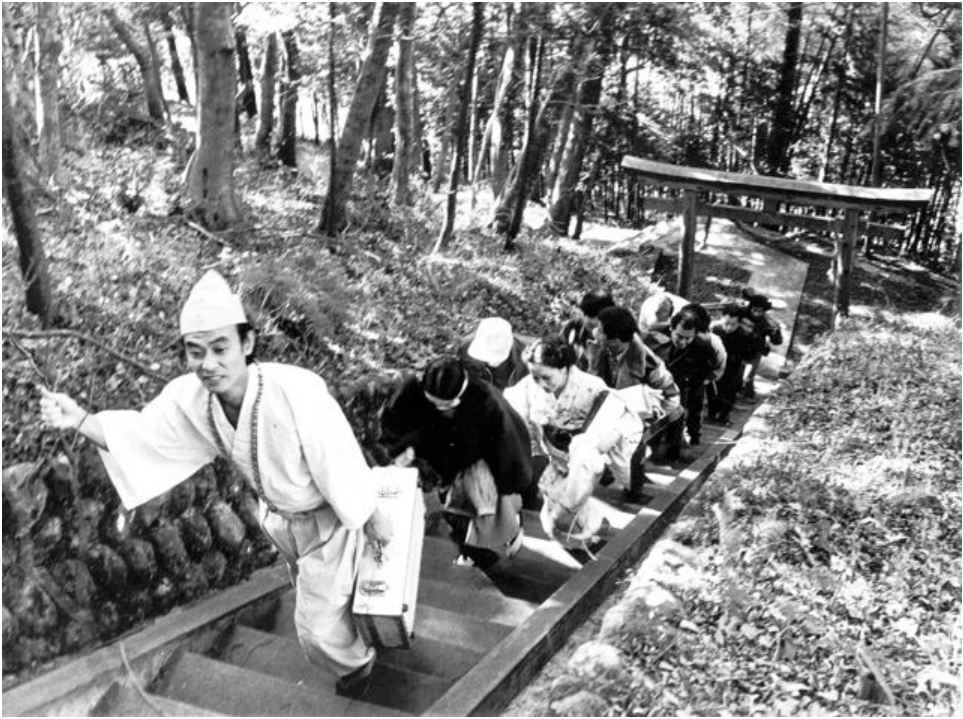
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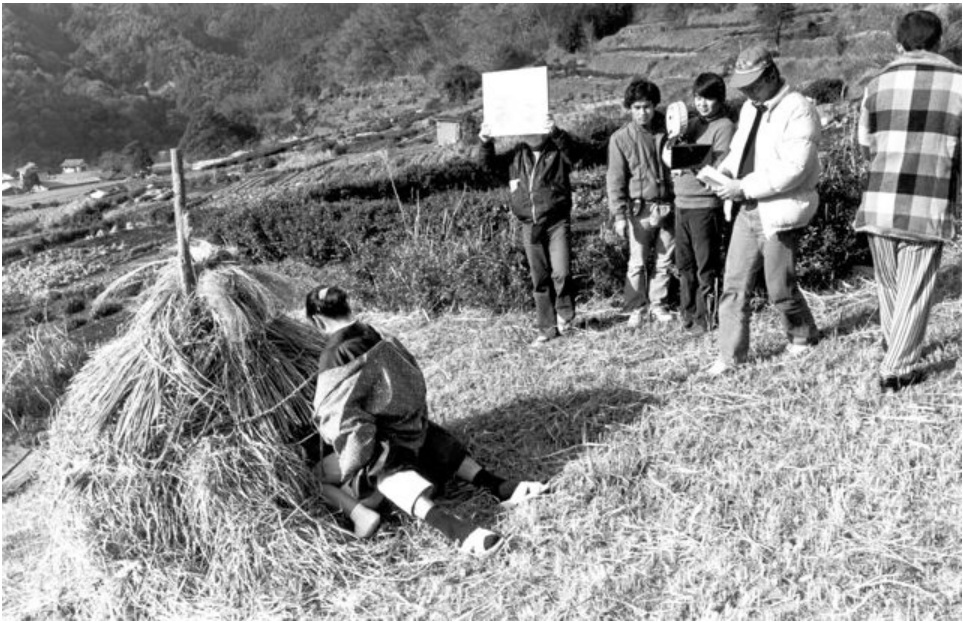
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Shall We F***?: Notes on Parody in the Pink

Julian Stringer

My intention in this paper is to make a number of comments concerning parody in Japanese pornographic cinema. Utilizing Linda Hutcheon's definition of parody as "repetition with critical distance," I shall attempt to illustrate the value of a critical impulse that pulls out of prior texts elements that may previously have been ignored or repressed.¹ My starting point is that parody has two faces. It is never simply critical or destructive of its object of attention, but also expressive of a certain affection for the very thing it mocks.

The focus of my analysis is a film made by Kokuei (with Shintocho) in 1984 called *Abnormal Family: My Brother's Wife*, or *Pervert Family: My Brother's Wife* (*Hentai kazoku: Aniki no yome-san*). This 60-minute porn parody in the style of the great Japanese director, Ozu Yasujiro, is the debut effort of Suo Masayuki, now famous both domestically and internationally for his successful feature-length hit comedies *Sumo Do, Sumo Don't* (*Shiko funjatta*, 1992—winner of the Japanese Academy Award for Best Film), *Fancy Dance* (1989), and especially *Shall We Dance?* (*Shall we Dansu?*, 1996), which has been the recipient of numerous major film festival awards and is one of the most successful foreign box-office hits to date in the United States. Although Suo is a major contemporary director, I am not at this stage primarily interested in making auteurist claims for his work. (Indeed, in a recent interview with a Japanese newspaper Suo himself talks of his films strictly as commodities.)² Instead, I have two other reasons for seeking to investigate the parodic pleasures of *Abnormal Family*. First, I am interested in the film because of what it does to Ozu, a director whose work I love and value very much; more specifically, I want to suggest how the film works as a critical re-evaluation of the Ozu canon, a canon in desperate need of re-consideration by Western critics. Second, I am drawn to the film because of my interest in Japanese porno



Figure 20: An Ozu-like low angle turns out to be ideal for flashing the sister's underwear.

films, particularly the genre known as the Pink Film. This cycle of movies has attracted some recent cult and journalistic attention,³ but little scholarly analysis in English to date (for a notable exception, see David Desser's *Eros Plus Massacre*).⁴

Nikkatsu turned to the production of adult films in the early 1970s so as to help stave off the effects of economic recession. Colonizing the market for movie erotica opened up during the previous decade by independents turning out low-budget product (cf. Kanto, Million, Okura, Shintocho, and Wakamatsu), this major mainstream studio initiated its successful Roman Porno cycle. While the Pink Film has never quite shaken off its low-brow associations, filmed pornography appears to have remained generally more accepted and vibrant in Japan than in comparable nations like the United States and Britain. Consisting of short, hour-long narratives that play in double or triple bills, Pink movies have over the last two or three decades constituted a large percentage of Japan's total film output, as a casual glance through the pages of any issue of *Kinema junpo* (Japan's most influential film magazine) from the 1970s or 1980s will testify. Moreover, the genre has enabled radical young directors, including Wakamatsu Koji, Morita Yoshimitsu,

and Kaneko Shusuke, to experiment by working within its aesthetic and thematic norms and constraints. Indeed, the most famous exponent of the Pink Film, Oshima Nagisa—director of the infamous *In the Realm of the Senses* (*Ai no koriida*, 1976) and its sequel, *In the Realm of Passion* (*Ai no borei*, 1978)—wrote a celebrated article arguing for its revolutionary and liberatory potential.⁵ Suo Masayuki, then, is only one of a veritable throng of first-time and established filmmakers who have toyed with the creative possibilities opened by the genre's one golden rule; provide the requisite sex scenes every ten or twelve minutes and you can do what you like with the rest of the narrative.

In the early 1980s, according to Thomas Weisser and Yuko Mihara Weisser, the advent of home video hit the Pink and Nikkatsu Roman Porno production lines hard.⁶ So too did continuing struggles over censorship. After the 1984 Ice Age Summit—a high-level conference on the future of sex films held between film producers, legislative bodies, and the police—the industry suffered numerous crackdowns forcing it to seek new methods of survival. Producing “scandalous” parodies of prestigious non-porn texts was one such tactic. After working as a Pink scriptwriter (*Scanty-Panty Doll: Pungent Aroma* [*Sukyanti doru: Nugitate no kaori*, 1984]) and a Pink actor (*Kanda River Pervert War* [*Kanda-gawa inran senso*, 1983]), Suo was given his first opportunity to direct. For his debut effort he chose to wrap a parodic remake of an Ozu-style film around the obligatory moments of eroticism and nudity. (Suo readily acknowledges the influence on his artistic practice of cinema scholar Hasumi Shigehiko, author of *Kantoku Ozu Yasujiro* [*Director Ozu Yasujiro*], and one-time president of the University of Tokyo, who taught at Rikkyo University when Suo was a student there.)⁷

Abnormal Family—which “because of the director’s lofty cinematic intentions” Weisser and Weisser dismiss as “*Pink light*” (emphasis in original)—can be said to exist only on the margins of the remake.⁸ Suo’s film does not rework any one prior text so much as a generic product identifiable as the “Ozu text.” The specific target of parody’s habitual critical scrutiny is here highly significant. Over a 35-year period between 1927 and 1962, Ozu made more than 50 films and established himself as one of Japan’s great populist directors. Not only did Ozu work consistently throughout the most wrenching times of Japan’s recent history, from the rise of mass culture, the spread of fascism and World War II, to the American Occupation and the nation’s emergence as a world superpower, but the genre he chose to work within, the



Figure 21: Graphic matching modeled on Ozu's style.

homu drama (home drama), or family melodrama, has now become institutionalized on Japanese television. *Abnormal Family* plays with its audience's prior knowledge of what may be termed "Ozu-ness" (or what Weisser and Weisser term "Ozu-isms") by collapsing together thematic and visual quotes from several specific titles, most obviously *Late Spring* (*Banshun*, 1949), *Early Summer* (*Bakushu*, 1951), and *Tokyo Story* (*Tokyo monogatari*, 1953). In particular, the film makes sustained and highly suggestive use of several formal strategies familiar from a viewing of the six color titles Ozu made before his death, from *Equinox Flower* (*Higanbana*, 1958) to *An Autumn Afternoon* (*Sanma no aji*, 1962).

A brief plot synopsis of *Abnormal Family* should be enough to illustrate how the film recycles aspects of such prior texts. Set in Tokyo in the present (the mid-1980s), it opens after the wedding of an elder son, Koichi, and his new middle class wife, Yuriko. In the family house, the newlyweds make loud passionate love in an upstairs bedroom as Koichi's widowed Father, together with his younger brother, Kazuo, and younger sister, Akiko, listen while seated around a downstairs dining table. After Kazuo complains that the newlyweds should go somewhere else so as not to disturb the family, Akiko says that she does not want to be an office lady for the rest of her life—she will find a nice man and marry him. Father goes to the local bar and then comes

home drunk, muttering under his breath how “Mama,” the bar hostess, looks just like his dead wife. On a fine sunny day, Kazuo is caught stealing pornographic magazines from a bookseller. Father then tells Yuriko that she looks just like his dead wife.

In the meantime, Koichi has started an affair with Mama, who ties him up, whips him and calls him swine (*buta*). Before long the family, not knowing that Akiko has now started working at a “Turkish” baths, suddenly notices how radiant she is looking. Father tells Akiko that she reminds him of his dead wife. After Yuriko finds out about Koichi’s affair, she takes revenge by comforting the now-humiliated Kazuo by letting him have sex with her. Akiko marries the manager of the Turkish baths and moves out of the house. Yuriko tells Father that she will live with him while she waits for Koichi to return home. After masturbating in the lonely house, Yuriko looks longingly at Father, who as the sun comes up is heard muttering to the memory of his dead wife, “Yuriko’s a good wife, mother. She is too good for Koichi. She is a good wife.”¹⁰

On one level, *Abnormal Family* works as a brilliant technical exercise—it is quite simply difficult to imagine what a cleverer parody of Ozu’s formal concerns may look like. The parody obviously consists in using “traditional” themes for porno ends, which Suo achieves by making repeated connections between the home drama and the Pink Film. In other words, Suo’s film retains all the appearances of a family melodrama but turns its generic conventions completely around. The music, used as sparingly here as in Ozu, is cheerfully innocent, and the presence on the soundtrack of an electric organ (by sheer serendipity this instrument is called an *erekuton*) recalls not only memories of numerous scenes in Ozu but is the favored instrument of many porn soundtracks as well. In addition, the family’s outrageous sex lives are nicely juxtaposed with their seemingly conventional home lives. Suo also makes sly use of a range of porn actors cast for their physical resemblance to such famed Ozu stars as Ryu Chishu and Hara Setsuko.

Not surprisingly, *Abnormal Family* also approximates all the distinct editing and camerawork techniques found in Ozu films as explicated by such critics as Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell,¹¹ Noël Burch,¹² and Donald Richie.¹³ Suo constantly violates the 180-degree line, uses an abundance of match-on-actions to depict minute character movement (most inventively during the sex scenes), utilizes low camera angles, static compositions, and an

understated style of performance, and emphasizes graphic and other compositional relationships over narrative space-time connections.

To illustrate how these formal techniques are recycled to serve specific parodic ends, it is worth looking in detail at the very first scene of the film. *Abnormal Family* opens with a series of spatially disorientating long shots of the Tokyo Tower which, nevertheless, work to establish where the following action is to take place. Through a transitional cut to the interior of a “traditional” Japanese-style house (itself an anomaly, as the settings for the rest of the film are decidedly modern), we see the brother’s wife of the title, Yuriko, bow to her new husband before getting into bed alongside him. As Koichi starts to penetrate Yuriko, and so initiate the first of the film’s sex numbers, a sudden cut takes us downstairs, where Father, Kazuo, and Akiko are depicted in long shot seated around a small dining table. Each is posed perfectly still and gazes vacantly off into a different corner of the room. When the sounds of Koichi and Yuriko’s lovemaking waft downstairs, the three family members look awkward and make slight embarrassed movements. The 360-degree space of the room is then established through closer dialogue shots: *Kazuo*: “They should go away for their honeymoon.” *Akiko*: “They’re very busy.” *Kazuo*: “Yes, they’re very hard working.” *Akiko*: “Hard at work fucking.”¹⁴ After a few more seconds, Father gets up to leave as a match on action takes him to the front door.

After an exterior establishing shot locates the street and the bar Father habitually frequents, an interior medium shot of Mama depicts her saying, “You’re late today” (*Kyo wa osoi n desu ne*) almost straight to camera. Father nods and replies simply, “Hmmm.” Suo then cuts back to Yuriko and Koichi having sex doggie-style, an “empty shot” of father’s jacket hanging on the wall, and then to a strange elliptic conversation between Kazuo and Akiko. “I’m sorry. Don’t cry,” says the former. “I’m not crying because you were mean to me,” Akiko replies. “I don’t know why. Suddenly I felt sad. I’m going to be an office lady for a while, and if I find someone nice I’ll get married and that’s it.”¹⁵

The implication here is that the lovemaking upstairs in the family house has emotionally upset Akiko, and that Kazuo for his part now has sex on the brain as well. As Akiko talks to Kazuo, a characteristically Ozu-like low angle shot hilariously depicts her side of the conversation from Kazuo’s optical point of view—as he is crouching down slightly above Akiko, who is seated

on the floor wearing a short dress, her brother is excellently placed to observe her exposed panties. Akiko quickly notices this attention, and pulls her dress down as she chastises Kazuo. The latter then looks offscreen, in the direction of the upstairs bedroom, and thus motivates a cut back to the newlyweds in action. By juxtaposing these three locations (bedroom, dining room, bar), a number of associations common to the Ozu text have been set up and then exposed as sexually interrelated. The sound of the daughter-in-law's lovemaking stimulates Father to think of his dead wife; the same sounds make Akiko resolve to work at a Turkish bath; Koichi is having sex with a woman who may or may not physically resemble his own mother; the fleeting glimpse of his sister's panties motivates Kazuo's later theft of a pornographic magazine.

What the use of such characteristic devices as low camera angles and "empty shots" suggest, then, is that there is always more to an Ozu film than purely formal delights. Suo's parodic approach points towards the interrogation of the ideological assumptions upon which Ozu movies and the genre of the home drama are built. While the vast majority of the most influential English-language criticism of Ozu's work is formalist-oriented, the transformations worked by *Abnormal Family* raise a number of questions concerning a different approach to critical method. What is this porno film saying about the constituent features of Ozu-ness? How and why does it call for a "sex-ing" of Ozu? How does it affectionately draw out of prior Ozu texts elements that may previously have been ignored or repressed?

It seems to me that it is worth pursuing two approaches to these questions. First, it is important to consider how the time-lag between the production context of Ozu films and the production context of Suo's Pink Film allows for a certain critical revisionism, or for repetition with critical distance. There are a number of important questions in this regard. For example, what can a parodic remake of prior texts do that the precursors could not (and vice versa)? How does this time-lag allow for the expression of new or different subject matter? One model for this kind of thinking is offered by Brian McFarlane in his discussion of Martin Scorsese's 1991 remake of J. Lee Thompson's 1961 *Cape Fear*, wherein McFarlane considers how the thirty year time-lag between the two films has allowed for processes of critical revision.¹⁶

Second, as I have already suggested, it is possible to take the parodic remake as the jumping-off point for an interrogation of the prior generic texts themselves. This raises the question of how the new text reveals what is repressed or hidden in both the prior texts and, crucially, the critical discourses that circulate around them.

As far as updating goes, *Abnormal Family* can clearly do things that Ozu could not. Although Suo reframes the home drama as a porn text—thus highlighting the similarities between the two genres—the Pink Film is a product of the 1960s whereas Ozu himself died in 1963. Suo's 1984 narrative is tied very closely to the fashions prevalent in the sex subcultures associated with Pink productions at this particular time. However, these contemporary links have been made in ways that are both surprising and intriguing, in that the film remains modern while simultaneously aspiring to the status of an “impossible,” post-1963 Ozu movie.

For example, consider the issue of performance. Part of the unusual effect of *Abnormal Family* is caused by having the actors present the sex scenes in mechanical, undramatic fashion, thus mimicking the performance technique Ozu sought from his own actors. Lines are spoken very flatly, facial expressions are blank, body movements are restricted and seemingly unspontaneous, especially during the most erotic moments. In short, the film appears to say, “This is what sex, Ozu-style, must look like.” The question raised by such performance styles, though, is one of cultural realism. If Ozu is so “Japanese,” and movie sexuality subject, in 1984, to so much contestation around the Ice Age Summit and resulting legislature,¹⁷ how can such unnatural-looking sex be remotely indicative of how Japanese people really behave in bed? What is so Japanese about any of this? And by extension, don't Ozu's films offer a cultural fantasy concerning “Japanese-ness”?

In a similar fashion, Kathe Geist points out that many Ozu narratives revolve around the problems caused to the middle class family when a young daughter leaves home, either to marry a man or to become an office lady and live a semi-independent life in Tokyo.¹⁸ In Suo's film, the young unmarried daughter, Akiko, leaves home to take up a part-time job in a Turkish baths sexually servicing male clients. This act may be considered a transposition of a crucial plot point from *Early Summer*, wherein Noriko (Hara Setsuko) also leaves the bosom of her family (and also has an older brother named Koichi). Yet it also suggests a further historical logic. In a controver-

sial claim that needs careful handling, Peter Constantine reports that one of the options open to young middle class women and students who wanted to earn a little extra money in the early 1980s was to work at establishments like Turkish baths and massage parlors.¹⁹ In other words, it is not outside the realm of possibility that the Noriko of *Late Spring* or *Early Summer*, or the Michiko (Iwashita Shima) of *An Autumn Afternoon*, or especially the latter's mischievous Akiko (Okada Mariko), would moonlight as a "Turkish" girl were she to find herself in Tokyo in 1984.²⁰ Similarly, through such contemporary references, the film opens up for inspection the curious relationships that exist in many Ozu narratives between older men and younger girls (cf. *An Autumn Afternoon* is once again of crucial significance in this regard.)

It may be, too, that such generic updatings enable us to locate the repressed in Ozu films and Ozu criticism. Parody can reproduce the pleasures of a prior text while simultaneously interrogating the assumptions upon which that pleasure is based. Indeed, I would argue that this act of interrogation is a necessary step in Ozu criticism, because writers habitually treat his works as though they were purely formal exercises devoid of popular cultural content. *Abnormal Family*, then, can be read as a piece of audio-visual film criticism, a revisionist piece of Ozu scholarship.

One important observation to make here is that the fact that Suo's movie is a comedy is significant. Reading Ozu as comic contradicts the normative reading of him as a "transcendental" master of Zen contemplation and spirituality, and it highlights how Japanese comedy often goes against our Western stereotypes of what Japanese cinema ought to be.²¹ Certainly, the critical cliché about Ozu among Western critics invests heavily in the notion of *mono no aware*, or the pathos of things, which writers tend to read as evidence of the director's "typically Japanese" awareness of the beauty of life's transient, impermanent qualities. (While it would be absurd to deny this quality in movies like *Equinox Flower* and *Tokyo Story*, it would be equally absurd to concentrate on it to the exclusion of all else.) Yet viewing Ozu through the lens of comedy and parody tends to place the emphasis on other matters, such as the director's habitual engagement with popular culture and its social contexts, not to mention the relish he takes in the pleasures of the senses. If in *Late Spring*, *Early Summer*, and countless other titles, such pleasures include walking, appreciating nature, eating, and drinking (not to mention farting in

Good Morning [*Ohayo*, 1959]), *Abnormal Family* suggests that the list should now be broadened out to include fucking and sucking as well.

Consider how the second scene of Suo's film makes some sharp observations on the ritual drinking of alcohol in Ozu. This subject is occasionally alluded to by critics, but it has seldom been subject to any kind of sociological analysis. (This is somewhat surprising—after all, if the drinking scenes were taken out of, say, *An Autumn Afternoon*, the film would fall apart.)²² In Suo's film, when Father returns home from seeing Mama at the bar he is met by Kazuo, who confronts him with a question:

Kazuo: You've been there again haven't you?

Father: Oh, yes.

Kazuo: She doesn't look like her.

Father: Oh, yes.

Kazuo: She looks nothing like her.

Father: She doesn't look anything like her? Oh.

Kazuo: Hey, Father, don't drink too much sake. Please take care of your health.

Father: What's this? So suddenly?

Kazuo: It doesn't matter. Go to bed.²³

The point of this short exchange—apart from highlighting the stilted nature of so many dialogue scenes in Ozu, and of showing a son's disrespectful treatment of his father—might be said to be to highlight the abrupt nature of Father's question ("So suddenly?"). Within the diegesis itself, the comment makes little sense; this is the very start of the film, and so the backstory to the conversation has not yet been fully established. Yet taken within the context of the discursive meanings that surround "Ozu-ness," it could refer to the striking, if critically unacknowledged fact that in classics like *Tokyo Story* and *An Autumn Afternoon*, children of all ages watch as their fathers (and husbands and brothers) drink themselves silly. Reading between the lines, the unspoken implication behind Kazuo's demand that his father not drink too much might be something like, "What's this? So suddenly?" (This is only the second scene and already you're complaining about how the

father drinks too much?),” or “What’s this? So suddenly? (Fathers always get drunk in Ozu movies and it is only now that this is being pointed out?)”

It could further be suggested that parody, as repetition with critical distance, fulfils a particular function within the cinema industries of strongly consensual national cultures (cf. Suo’s spoof short film on the contemporary “salaryman” mentality, *A Classroom for Businessmen* [*Sarariman Kyoshitsu*, 1986]). Here, what is repressed by “official culture” will return in playful, often disrespectful “unofficial” form.²⁴ So while Japan has some of the strongest censorship laws of all “democratised” societies, it also produces some of the most extreme and violent pornography. In *Abnormal Family*, alcohol consumption and sexual abandon are the mirror-images of restraint and repression, forcing one to ask the question: What happens to all the sexual energy that is generated, deferred, and left unconsummated by Ozu’s stories of marriage and remarriage, young women leaving home and moving to the modern city, and older men pursuing younger women?

In his influential formalist reading of Japanese cinema, *To the Distant Observer*, Noël Burch suggests that Ozu films offer a unique form of narrative articulation and disruption in the shape of what he terms “pillow shots”. This phrase has been adapted by Burch from:

Makurakotoba, or pillow-word: a conventional epithet or attribute for a word; it usually occupies a short, five-syllable line and modifies a word, usually the first in the next line. Some pillow-words are unclear in meaning; those whose meanings are known function rhetorically to raise the tone and to some degree also function as images.²⁵

In other words, pillow shots are “empty shots” seemingly devoid of narrative action or significance (cf. the famous empty shot of the vase at the end of *Late Spring*). Such shots are somewhat similar to free-frames, except that they always imply a sense of narrative duration, and that they remove the human figure and human movement from the screen. Pillow shots exist, as Burch writes elsewhere on the threshold of the diegesis, on the “outer limits of diegetic production.”²⁶

Taking my inspiration from *Abnormal Family*, I would like to reappropriate Burch’s concept of the “pillow shot” so as to give it (restore?) a more sexual-



Figure 22: *Abnormal Family*.

ized meaning. In Suo Masayuki’s film, the Ozu-style pillow shots are not just “empty shots,” they are *also literally pillow shots*—that is, shots of pillows and beds. They show the empty bed waiting to be filled, the pillows sitting on top of the sheets as if in anticipation, they suggest the memory of an erotic encounter, or they promise the thrill of sexual action yet to come. Even a direct quote from an Ozu “pillow shot”—such as a male jacket hanging on the wall—will in Suo’s hands both suspend the diegetic flow and also set up the expectation that the rest of the character’s clothes may soon be coming off as well.

In a similar fashion, Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell’s influential 1976 reading of Ozu emphasizes the director’s sense of narrative dislocation. For Thompson and Bordwell, there is in Ozu a “disruption of narrative linearity,” meaning that Ozu’s interest is in “the spaces between points of narrative action.”²⁷ Ozu uses pillow shots, or what Thompson and Bordwell refer to as “cutaways”, “not to signify narrative elements but to spaces just beyond the periphery of the action.”²⁸

It should be pointed out that the Pink Films of the 1970s and 1980s work in a way analogous to this kind of reading of Ozu’s narratives. In other words, they too “disrupt narrative linearity” by taking an interest in “the spaces between points of narrative action”—simply put, those five or six sex scenes every ten minutes are what count in terms of subject matter. And yet,

paradoxically, the sex scenes are themselves always peripheral to the narrative action: while they are the main focus of narrative interest, they do not necessarily advance the key storyline. Moreover, to return to Burch once more, those empty shots, the pillow shots, can themselves be read in a sexualized manner; as a form of willful self-censorship, or alternatively a sign of radical potentiality in the Ozu textual system. Why cut away at crucial narrative and emotional moments? What kind of emotional or sensual feelings do the pillow shots embody? What do they cut away from? What exactly do they seek to disrupt?

Two themes suggest themselves here. The first is alluded to by Robin Wood in a characteristically perceptive, if methodologically frustrating article on the “Noriko Trilogy”: *Early Summer*, *Late Spring*, and *Tokyo Story*. (Wood and Suo are clearly on the same wavelength in their desire to herald the necessary next step in Ozu criticism—the sexing of the texts themselves. Suo does this by collapsing the above three texts into one and renaming his heroine Yuriko.) Wood suggests, on the basis of a story from Ozu’s childhood reported in Donald Richie’s 1974 critical study²⁹ that Ozu was, if not gay, at least “able to remain in touch with his innate bisexuality.”³⁰ This sensibility, according to Wood, is behind Ozu’s great empathy for, nay identification with his female characters like Noriko. Accordingly, rather than being hopelessly repressed films, Wood reads Ozu texts as poignantly *about* the repression of male and female sexuality within patriarchal capitalism. Another way of putting this is to say that pursuing a reading of Ozu through the sexual political terms opened up by Robin Wood and Suo Masayuki exposes members of the Japanese (and by extension other patriarchal capitalist) families as dysfunctional, equipped with sexually ambiguous drives, prone to make “unacceptable” object choices, and vulnerable to the kind of incongruous new meanings opened up through parodic and/or camp re-contextualization.

The second theme is a little more difficult to handle. Suo’s very title, *Abnormal Family*, suggests the concept of incest, a trope that has been very important to Oshima Nagisa’s reading of Japanese cinema.³¹ In his New Wave (*nuberu bagu*) films and written manifestos of the 1960s, Oshima rejected Ozu as too “traditional” and repressive (in short, too politically “incorrect”—a stance shared by other young directors of the time such as Shinoda Masahiro and Yoshida Kiju). Yet Oshima simultaneously deployed the incest thematic so as to raise questions concerning the perceived homogeneity and specific-

ties of Japanese culture, especially the perceived monochromatic nature of its citizens' ethnicity. As such, Oshima has played his part in debates over the definition and meaning of *nihonjinron* (literally “theory of Japanese people”), or the discourse of Japanese uniqueness. Contributing to this discourse has been almost a national pastime since the end of World War II, even if discussion has sometimes been framed in a culturally retrograde, not to say racist manner. According to Harumi Befu, for example, one of the prime components of *nihonjinron* discourse is “racial homogeneity,” or rather “‘perceived homogeneity’—that is, a belief in homogeneity regardless of how heterogeneous the reality of Japanese racial makeup may be.”³²

Abnormal Family contributes to the terms of this discussion by doing two things. First, it marks a step beyond Oshima's critical project in that it retains the 1960s New Wave attention to sexuality while also reclaiming the incest trope from Ozu's family melodramas. Second, it reframes Ozu's perceived concern for the “unique” nature of post-war Japaneseness around sexual and social material, rather than around quasi-mystical, abstract qualities like Zen spiritualism and *mono no aware*. In short, Ozu's work has now become located rather than transcendental.

This happens in Suo's film through the concept of the lookalike. In the world of “Ozu-isms,” the lookalike may be considered a paradigm of perceived racial purity. (One of the strangest moments in *Late Spring* occurs when Noriko claims that her [Japanese] suitor resembles American actor Gary Cooper.) In *Abnormal Family* there is an almost literal illustration of Befu's point that the discourse of Japanese uniqueness only has to *perceive* of racial homogeneity. Taking a turn from a similar plot point in *An Autumn Afternoon*, Father is convinced that every woman he meets looks just like his dead wife, even though other characters repeatedly tell him they don't resemble her in the slightest. Similarly, the porn film industry is implicated in the concept of family resemblances in its habitual desire to remake, and so parody, both prior cultural texts and famous national icons.³³ The lookalikes of Ryu Chishu and other Ozu performers turn star images that are already in mass circulation inside out. So, while Hara Setsuko may be known in Japan as the “Eternal Virgin,”³⁴ the very first scene of *Abnormal Family* depicts Yuriko being penetrated from behind. At the same time, while the actress who plays the Noriko character in Suo's film is recognizable as a Hara Setsuko substitute, she doesn't in truth actually look *that* much like her famous predecessor.

To sum up, I have been arguing that *Abnormal Family* is of value for the ways in which it highlights aspects of the Ozu text that critics have on the whole not been interested in picking up on. The film adopts a critical position that has not been presented elsewhere. As parody Suo's movie embodies the principle of what Linda Hutcheon calls "ironic inversion";³⁵ that is, it repeats through critical distance, and it does so in a way that subverts some of the concepts so valued by modern artistic cultures, namely originality and individuality. Suo is obviously fond enough of Ozu to willingly subsume his own identity under that of the memory of his mentor's numerous prior texts.

Yet it is also important to remember that the associations that cohere around the notions of irony and repetition in this revisionist treatment of Ozu are themselves encouraged by the playfulness of the great director himself. It may be that Suo's film is so satisfying partly because much of the pleasure of "Ozu-ness" lies in the simple repetition of a good thing. Significantly, Ozu himself remade his own films on numerous occasions—*A Story of Floating Weeds* (*Ukigusa monogatari*, 1934) as *Floating Weeds* (*Ukigusa*, 1959); *I Was Born, But...* (*Umarete wa mita keredo*, 1932) as *Ohayo*—and he used immediately identifiable stylistic traits. More than that, he retained his favoured actors across a range of films. In other words, repetition with critical distance was itself a positive factor in Ozu's work, not a sign of cultural regression as it could easily have been.

Abnormal Family updates the fantasy Japan of Ozu Yasujiro into the *demi-monde* of postmodern pornographic parody without sacrificing any of the pleasures of prior Ozu texts. The film encourages a radical re-reading of some of the country's most celebrated and brilliant movies. The critical enumeration of those re-readings shall have to wait for another day, as shall a comparative analysis of the "sexual numbers" in *Abnormal Family* and the "musical numbers" in *Shall We Dance?*³⁶ In the meantime, I hope to have demonstrated the interest of Suo Masayuki's debut feature film. *Abnormal Family* deserves full international distribution and further critical consideration.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to David Desser, Sumie Jones, Lori Hitchcock, Kimijima Megumi, James Naremore, and Shikoda Sachiko for various kinds of help that have made the writing of this article possible.

NOTES

¹ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, 6.

² Yasuyuki, “Ginko ga ushisenu Nihon eiga kyokan ete sekai e,” 9

³ Hunter, *Eros in Hell*; Rayns, “Japan: Sex and Beyond”; Weisser and Weisser, *The Sex Films*.

⁴ David Desser’s *Eros Plus Massacre*, 98-107

⁵ Oshima, “Theory of Experimental Pornography,” in *Cinema, Censorship and the State*, 251-286.

⁶ “Fogging, Editing and Censorship,” in Weisser and Weisser, 27-28

⁷ cf. Hasumi, *Kantoku Ozu Yasujiro*.

⁸ *Sex Films*, 309; emphasis in original.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 308.

¹⁰ “*Okaasan. Ii yome ja nai ka. Koichi ni wa mottai nai. Ii yome ja nai ka.*”

All quotes are from an English-language transcript of the film’s dialogue prepared by Kimijima Megumi and myself. The screenplay of *Abnormal Family: My Brother’s Wife* has been published in Japanese (Yokomori and Nagano, *Shall We Dance?*).

¹¹ Thompson and Bordwell, “Space and Narrative in the Films of Ozu”; Bordwell, *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*.

¹² Burch, *To the Distant Observer*.

¹³ Richie, *Ozu*.

¹⁴ Kazuo: “*Ryoko ikeba ii no ni.*” Akiko: “*Kaisha isogashii n datte.*” Kazuo: “*Majime da na.*” Akiko: “*Honto. Kuso majime.*”

¹⁵ Kazuo: “*Gomen yo. Naku na yo.*” Akiko: “*Anata ni ijimaru saretentai tenja na wa yo. Nan da ka. Kyu ni kanashiku natchatta no yo. Kono ma ma shibaraku OL yatte dare ka ii hito mitsukete kekkon shitara sore de oshimai nan te kanashii ja nai, nan da ka, totemo kanashii ja nai. Nani yo.*”

¹⁶ McFarlane, *Novel to Film*.

¹⁷ cf. consult the 1984 Pink Commandment as described in Weisser and Weisser, *The Sex Films*, 28

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- ¹⁸ Geist, “The Role of Marriage in the Films of Yasujiro Ozu.”
- ¹⁹ Constantine, *Japan’s Sex Trade*, 39.
- ²⁰ Peter Constantine’s fascinating book reports on other aspects of Japan’s early 1980s sex scene that find their correspondence in *Abnormal Family*. For example, when Koichi takes up with Mama she subjects him to a *sofuto rosoku zeme*, or soft candle attack (Constantine, *Japan’s Sex Trade*, 99), before offering the *kogane mizu sabisu*, or golden water service (Ibid., 115).
- ²¹ Barrett, “Comic Targets and Comic Styles: An Introduction to Japanese Film Comedy”; Bock, “Ozu Reconsidered”; Buruma, “Humor in Japanese Cinema.”
- ²² One of the observations made in the British Film Institute monograph *Images of Alcoholism* (Cook and Lewington) is that alcoholics, both onscreen and off, rarely perceive themselves to be alcoholics. It seems to me that Ozu’s characters embody all the traits of such a denial.
- ²³ Kazuo: “*Mata asoko itteta no?*” Father: “*Aa so ka.*” Kazuo: “*Nitenai yo.*” Father: “*So ka.*” Kazuo: “*Nitenai yo. Zenzen.*” Father: “*Nitenai ka? So ka. Nitenai ka?*” Kazuo: “*Otosan. Anmari sake nomu na yo. Karada daji ni shite kure yo na.*” Father: “*Nan da? Totsuzen.*” Kazuo: “*Ii ja nai ka. Nero yo.*”
- ²⁴ Buruma, *Behind the Mask*, 71.
- ²⁵ Burch, *To the Distant Observer*, 160
- ²⁶ Burch, “Narrative/Diegesis—Thresholds, Limits,” 22
- ²⁷ Thompson and Bordwell, “Space and Narrative in the Films of Ozu,” 51
- ²⁸ Ibid., 55.
- ²⁹ Richie, *Ozu*, 124.
- ³⁰ Wood, “The ‘Noriko’ Trilogy: Three Films of Ozu With Setsuko Hara,” 73
- ³¹ Allison, “Transgressions of the Everyday,” 467-499.
- ³² Befu, “Nationalism and Nihonjinron,” 114

³³ In their generally invaluable book, Weisser and Weisser (*The Sex Films*, 174-175) provide a double-page picture spread of “Pink girls who became popular because they resembled a well-known star.” Their examples are Kazamatsuri Yuki (who resembles Matsusaka Keiko), Terashima Mayumi (posing as Matsuda Seiko), Hyuga Akiko (Momoe) and No-hira Yuki (Kurihara Komaki). (It might be interesting to consider whether this penchant for lookalikes extends to the rise of the gay male Pink Film in the 1990s.) The relation between the porn actress’ image and the cultural significance and status of the non-porn icon being impersonated is a subject worth further consideration.

³⁴ Richie, *Geisha, Gangster, Neighbor, Nun*, 12

³⁵ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, 63

³⁶ See Linda Williams’ brilliant study of film pornography for the analogy between “numbers” in the porn and musical genres (Williams, *Hard Core*, 120-152). It may be that future work on Japanese sex films will need to pay greater attention to the differences between soft-core Pink Films, censored and uncensored “AV” (audio video/adult video) titles currently widely available on video, VCD and DVD, and the kind of hard-core sado-masochism fetishized by some Western critics (Hunter, *Eros in Hell*).

SHALL WE F***?

All Jargon and No Authenticity? A Phenomenological Inquiry into the Pink Film¹

Andrew Grossman

If culture creates us all, our creation is forever our curse, for culture is generally what strangers create. While the neoliberal agenda of Anglo-American culturalism exhorts us to participate dynamically in an overwhelming media landscape, we mainly interpret texts passively received from the culture industry, and our interpretive acts thus constitute delusions, not exertions, of (self-) control. From this delusional haze emerges the contemptuous smile of the Frankfurt School, which posits dystopian, idolatrous masses hypnotized by the civilizing tortures of bad art, and which warns us against complicity with the cultural niceties of corporate fascism. We've constantly searched, then, for academia's most precious phantom and holiest of grails, "the subversive," a word echoed hollowly from the outset of high modernism past postmodernism's undignified demise. The necessary call to subvert is potent still, promising us protection from *fully* worshipful complicity with our cultural makers and staving off the sterility of ivory tower scholarship. But the basic question remains: with what do we really subvert? What necessarily stands beyond mainstream culture's total and inevitable assimilations, in terms of both content (genre and subject matter) and form (the means of production, distribution, and consumption)? How can today's seeming subversion avoid becoming tomorrow's normativity?

Because it replaces conventional narrative structure with a tautological content and lingers unpretentiously at the socioeconomic margins,² pornography, especially in its feminist, queer, and/or sadomasochistic guises, has often presented itself as such an inherently subversive tool. Mainstream, heteronormative pornography, however, will always remain inadequate.³ As Angela Carter famously observed in the opening of *The Sadeian Woman*, as long

as pornography “does not encompass the possibility of change” and acts “as if we were the slaves of history and not its makers,”⁴ it will only reproduce the status quo of sexual difference and dead-end gender binaries. The progressive position of feminists who uphold the liberating or subversive power of pornographic fantasy is at first attractive but can be countered by the now familiar arguments of Adorno and Horkheimer. A multi-billion dollar business, pornography entraps the libido within a generic, banal, and ultimately execrable cycle of production, distribution, consumption, and bodily release. As Marcuse argues in *Eros and Civilization*, even the most seemingly transgressive or liberatory orgasms emerge from (and become apologias for) the enveloping fabric of generalized social repression, and true fulfillment becomes exiled to a transcendent realm beyond our current, non-revolutionary state of material existence. No longer is (sexual) pleasure the index of man’s happy mastery of socioeconomic pain or existential anxiety; pleasure, reduced to the inexorable mechanics of nocturnal masturbation before a video monitor, becomes circumscribed, enslaved to means of commercial production, and cordoned off from reality. When our nightly ritual is finished, we sink into the realization that the only real difference between art and pornography is that the latter has a pressingly utilitarian function and a predictably material outcome.⁵

Spellbound within this masturbatory cycle, we become beholden to *other people’s fantasies*—for that’s what pornography is, unless we are pornographers ourselves—and whatever “liberation” ensues is contingent upon alien, manufactured images coinciding with our own secret pleasures from time to time. In these neurotic, magical coincidences, we believe our orgasms have achieved some universal significance—after all, how remarkable it is that a filmmaker and a dispersed audience have harbored the same sexual fantasy! Obviously, this “universalism” is illusory—as illusory as the universalizing connections allegedly produced by realist narratives that encourage us to identify self-interestedly with questing characters. Our neuroses swallow us, as our erections unwittingly respond to and concur with economies and ideologies we know are pathological, prearranged, and coerced.

The ease of our manipulation and the passivity of our spectatorship speak to a masochism that is, indeed, more social than sexual. Lacking the willpower to exit the theater or eject the DVD, we reassure ourselves that our spectatorship is a two-sided coin which allows us to alternate at will between



Figure 23: Riot police attack the camera at the end of *Violated Angels*.

the roles of authoritarian sadist (active reveler in images) and inert masochist (passive receiver of images), as if these potential roles were not themselves granted conditionally by a master filmmaker-sadist looming above. To call this state of affairs “nihilistic” is generous, for nihilism at least retains its philosophizing “ism,” whereas cognition in this masturbatory cycle is merely reflexive and emasculating. To call this state of affairs “culturalism,” meanwhile, can only be a grandiose apologia or sanguine rationalization.

The “politicized”—albeit soft-core—pornography of the early Japanese *pinku eiga* is supposed to know better, we are told.⁶ The Pink Film of the 1960s moved beyond mainstream pornography’s immediately pragmatic concerns to connect erotic psychodrama with the transformative political energies of the era, subordinating the passive reception of erotic imagery to apparent calls to worldly action. The earlier Pink Films—such as those of Tetsuji Takechi, Wakamatsu Koji, and Adachi Masao—absorbed not only the French new wave’s Marxism and Brechtian tricks but also the anti-Americanism of Kobayashi’s *Black River* (*Kuroi kawa*, 1957) and Imamura’s *Pigs and Battleships* (*Buta to gunkan*, 1961), in which the postwar American military base looms as a site of neocolonial emasculation. The Japanese student movement figures prominently in the more overtly political of Pink Films, which, like Oshima’s *Night and Fog in Japan* (*Nihon no yoru to kiri*, 1960), feature as heroes members of the Zengakuren,⁷ the Marxist student conglomerate known for its protests of the 1960 ANPO treaty. By the time the Pink Film came to dominate a disproportionate chunk of Japanese cinema in the early 1970s, however, its rough, de rigueur sadomasochism became merely a marketing device for thrill-seeking masses, while its bald erotic allegories continued to solicit

praise from critics prone to praise anything ensconced within sexual symbolism.

Even when not engaging in openly political contentions, the Pink Film retains a countercultural aura not for its signature sadistic rape scenes—for misogynist rape fantasies are conventional, not countercultural—but for its status as penurious (albeit profitable) fringe art.⁸ While the Pink Film’s trademark rape, we hope, is meant to critique an emasculated, postwar Japanese patriarchy futilely grasping at fleeting power, the genre’s decision to use sadomasochistic kink and “fascistic” depictions of female bondage as a catch-all allegory for seemingly *every* political theme has sat uncomfortably with many critics. Donald Richie, skeptical from the outset, lambasted the genre’s adolescent crudity and singled out Wakamatsu as a purveyor of dehumanizing “junk” who sought legitimation through political topicality. Even Noël Burch, whose (mostly) sympathetic readings of Wakamatsu’s *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* (*Taiji ga mitsuryo suru toki*, 1966) and *Violated Angels* (*Okasareta bakui*, 1967) were partly responsible for upholding the director’s avant-garde reputation in the West, questioned the Pink Film’s political claims. While Burch acknowledges that the genre’s “...mechanical association of unbridled sexual fulfillment with revolutionary politics...characterizes not only much independent film-work, but also the ideology of certain ultra-Leftist groups in Japan,”⁹ he is hesitant to legitimize the “political” symbolism of *Violated Angels*’ infantile hero, whose rape and murder of unattainable women speciously equate the violent penetrations of individuated sexual bodies with the transgressions of corporate, political bodies:

Politically, we are dealing with typical petty bourgeois illusion. The person or crimes of a young homicidal psychopath are totally unacceptable as images of political revolution, let alone as mobilizing symbols, except...for a narrow fringe of the petty bourgeoisie, whose revolt lacks class perspective.¹⁰

If “on an artistic plane” such violent images nevertheless “fruitfully nourish” a “Marxist framework,” as Burch further argues,¹¹ the degree of this “fruitfulness” remains open to question. Burch really has no reason to hedge, however—if these are petty bourgeois illusions, the works should be *fruitlessly* political, diluting an authentic Marxist framework with commercialistic mandates for routine titillation. Burch’s semiotic and culturalist approach ultimately assumes that a work carries meaning (or bears fruit) when meaning is

read into it, with authenticity, political or otherwise, arising in reader-response fashion as needed. But do we really believe that a film's bad politics become fruitful when a film asks us to believe they are fruitful, as if the interpretive act were *literally* the creative act?

Even Jasper Sharp, in the Pink Film's lengthiest apologia to date, *Behind the Pink Curtain: The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema* (2008), openly acknowledges the frequent vapidness of the genre's political strivings, especially in his discussion of Okuwaki Toshio's *Naked Pursuit* (*Kofun*, 1968). A misogynous rape scenario that posits an infantile male protagonist suffering from an under-defined identity crisis, Okuwaki's film conflates contrived topical references and "existential" sexual frustrations with the present reality of 1960s student rebellion. As Sharp skeptically remarks:

What, for instance, does a film like Toshio Okuwaki's *Naked Pursuit*...really tell us about the student struggles? Its narrative effectively amounts to little more than a series of cat-and-mouse assaults on a young woman by a desperate Zengakuren activist...[T]he events unfolding...are lent only the scantest degree of legitimacy through an early flashback of the young man throttling a police officer, superimposed over authentic footage of a student protest.¹²

Just as bourgeois illusions of revolt are not tantamount to the fruitful cultivation of class consciousness, a meaningful engagement with the student movement cannot be reduced to the interleaving of one pretentious or impressionistic image. Yet many Pink Films employ perfunctory allusions to political agitation in the hopes of winning artistic legitimacy. It is no accident that Wakamatsu's (arguably) most politically thoroughgoing film, *Ecstasy of the Angels* (*Tenshi no kokotsu*, 1972), derives its legitimacy not from offhand references but from a direct engagement with contemporary leftist history and rhetoric. Loosely inspired by the Japanese Red Army's terrorist bombing campaigns of 1971 and anticipating its imminent disintegration into factional violence, *Ecstasy of the Angels* centers on a Marxist cell plotting an anti-American terrorist attack. Wakamatsu's rough sex scenes are a seeming afterthought, a commercialistic decoration—a welcome change of pace from so many Pink Films that exploit the student revolts as political adornment. While screenwriter Adachi Masao, himself a member of the Japanese Red Army, likely took his themes at face value,¹³ Wakamatsu's deliberately witless



Figure 24: Adachi Masao takes his turn with the whip, in *Running in Madness, Dying in Love*.

handling of the characters' mind-numbing Marxist rhetoric recalls—unintentionally or not—nothing less than Godard's parodic *La Chinoise* (1967), whose callow Parisian revolutionaries mouth Maoist harangues with a robotic idealism more delusional than heroic. But if Godard occasionally mocks sophistry, he is usually more suspicious of the image. When the second half of *Weekend* (1967) devolves into speeches about Algerian independence delivered directly to the camera, Godard acknowledges the limitations of the film's famous traffic jam scene and other visual metaphors to incite revolt, and reinstates the primacy of nearly unmediated language. Because Wakamatsu's oeuvre is rarely witty, however, *Ecstasy of the Angels* lacks the openly humorous counterpoint *Weekend* finds in *La Chinoise*, and we must give Wakamatsu the benefit of the doubt if we're to see *Ecstasy* as satire.

Nevertheless, this “benefit” must be given conditionally, and Donald Richie's old suspicions of Wakamatsu's opportunism are well founded. A 2007 interview with Wakamatsu about *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* reveals the director's ongoing caginess and eagerness to exploit his auteurist aura:

In the movie I talk about the relationship between power, those who are in power, and the people, but I do it through the relationship between a man and a woman...I didn't address any political issues directly, but I'm sure most viewers will understand what the movie's trying to say. You could give it a more philosophical reading if you were so inclined, but it's not a difficult or complicated film.¹⁴

Yet I myself cannot know exactly what *The Embryo Hunts in Secret*—the story of a psychopath who tortures a young woman only to have the tables fatally turn on him—is really “trying to say” apart from an easy commentary on patriarchal impotence, embalmed in Oedipal platitudes. Just as Oshima Nagisa took to task the roman-porno genre for timidly employing sexuality as a subtext but not as a theme in itself,¹⁵ so should Wakamatsu dispense with subtextual and hermeneutic diversions and just say what he wants to say, rather than *trying* to articulate a theme through public domain sadomasochistic allegories.¹⁶

Putting the Pink Film’s political authenticity aside for the moment, we have, at least, reached a point at which we can address the genre’s political conjecture without the intervening issues of ethnocentricity and Orientalism. Indeed, Western preconceptions of what constitutes suitable (generic) erotica have long colored foreign perspectives of the Pink Film. The Western viewer’s presumed aversion to Pink sadism not only “others” Japanese tastes but imbues Pink Films with a secondary aura or layer of avant-gardism, one arising not from the films’ new-wave styles but from the delicate Westerner’s aesthetic revulsion. Consider David Desser’s comments on Wakamatsu’s *The Embryo Hunts in Secret*:

The Brechtianism of *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* notwithstanding, the film is still disturbing to a Western viewer, the alienation effects insufficient to overcome our emotional distaste for the action. Rape and sadomasochism predominate in the Pink Film and Roman Porno [romantic-pornographic film] as compared to American, and especially European, “soft-core” films which feature lushly photographed...love-making. ...It is difficult to believe any audience can truly enjoy this film, which would certainly support the notion of its Brechtianism.¹⁷

The ethnocentricity of Desser’s moralism is inherent in his grammar: the word “our” is equated with “the Western viewer,” but the subject of Desser’s following sentence sneakily switches to “any audience,” universalizing the Western gaze. Regardless, it is frankly hard to imagine any large-scale male audience *not* delighting in sadism—Pink Film rape, after all, fuels a multimillion-dollar industry. The Pink Film’s attempted Brechtianism, as Donald



Figure 25: In a scene often called Brechtian for its obvious use of bright red paint for blood, the perpetrator in *Violated Angels* lies in fetal position—his victims arrayed in the shape of the Japanese national flag.

Richie and Oshima Nagisa have eloquently argued, merely grants a veneer of legitimacy to what otherwise would be a triumph of erotic sophistry.

I do not, however, want to harp about ethnocentricity or its more villainous inverse, Orientalism, or the other usual suspects that have made Asian film criticism over the past three decades such a joyless labor. Nor will I indulge the infantile yet ever-popular academic game of “my subject position is better than your subject position,” a game that has become the inevitable weapon of critics who, needing to mark their turf against the competition, reduce criticism to incidental faultfinding. I have no doubt that my own subject position is at least as flawed, insecure, and limited as everyone else’s. What is problematic in Desser’s comment, then, is not overt bias (for human bias is inevitable) but tacit, myopic judgments about the ideological functions of genre overall. Should we believe that the Pink Film’s awkward attempts to sexually allegorize Japan’s sociopolitical neuroses are more objectionable than, say, the covert repressions endemic to the West’s conservative and over-lording action and horror genres? Though keen on decoding other cultures through the tell-tale conventions of their genre films, Westerners rarely care how a Japanese critic might semiotically (mis)interpret the particularly American folk psychoses of, say, *The Last House on the Left* (1972) or *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), let alone wonder if these films’ countrified sadisms and misogynous panics would trouble the sensibilities of the “Eastern viewer”. In the age of omnivorous transnational consumption, American critics might no longer corner the market on cross-cultural skepticism. If Westerners can raise a quizzical eyebrow at the Pink Film’s possibly spurious claims

to sociopolitical insight, Japanese genre fans can likewise amuse themselves with Wes Craven's desperate claim that the backwoods rape of *Last House on the Left* reflects deeply into the bruised psyche of Vietnam-era America, or realize that the bare-chested Anglo racism of the post-*Rambo* Hollywood action film is a far more toxic generic institution than the express sado-masochism of their own neurotic Pink Films.

Regardless, American critics needn't look to the Pink Film to find convergences of low-budget genre filmmaking and leftist tendentiousness. We forget that apparently disposable 1970s blaxploitation movies like *Hammer* (1972), *Boss Nigger* (1972), *Black Mama, White Mama* (1973), and *Bucktown* (1975) were topically colored by crude Marxist rhetoric and cartoonish (if somehow telling) critiques of class reproduction. In light of the conservatism of Hollywood's post-Reaganite action film, it seems astonishing today that a mainstream Roger Corman production like *I Escaped from Devil's Island* (1973) could feature as its hero a member of The Communist League (played by Christopher George) who spouts doctrinaire Marxism and chides the follies of Franco-Belgian colonialism. The only missing piece, it seems, is an internationally curious Japanese semiotician eager to read into such American cultural artifacts, fetishize out of proportion topical political references arguably as superficial as those of *Naked Pursuit*, and declare great transcultural insight into American socio-politics of the 1970s. This really isn't to invalidate any such insights, for blaxploitation cinema, for instance, indeed reflected exigent contentious politics of the Black Panther era, much as *Naked Pursuit's* inserted images of Zengakuren suppression might not be reduced entirely to a director's desperate bid for film festival legitimacy. However, we should at least couch these semiotic insights within realistic, if not cynical, perspectives, and realize how flimsy such political themes can become when entrapped within the superficialities of the commercial cinematic image.

While a comparison between the Pink Film and tendentious American genre works of the early 1970s may clarify matters of content, it does not account for Japanese new wavers' modernist styles or purported Brechtianism, for the 1960s Pink Film was as much a stylistic affectation as a generic construct. While Wakamatsu and his followers often engaged the alienation effects that were *de rigueur* for new wavers, we cannot chalk everything up to Brechtian formalism without critiquing the content of the Pink Films' politics *as* actual politics (something we will return to shortly). More to the point,

when Burch, Desser, and (more recently) Jasper Sharp invoke Brecht to frame the Pink Film, they are (as far as I can tell) mainly referring to superficial estrangements produced by discontinuous editing, repellent heroes, and an objectivized, clinical framing of shots, but *not* to the *Verfremdungseffekt's* didactic disruption of false consciousness—an especial problem considering that the capitalistic and sometimes prestigious enterprise of the Pink Film has become a false consciousness in itself. Because the Pink Film pathologizes sexuality as part and parcel of its socio-aesthetic project, it only further mystifies and buries in allegory its themes, rather than expressing its politics with *true* Brechtian didacticism. (Must we remind people that replacing a capitalist false consciousness with an aesthetic one is *not* Brechtian?) Much as Adorno's *The Jargon of Authenticity* (*Jargon der Eigenlichkeit: Zur deutschen Ideologie*, 1964) critiqued the German attempt to rescue subjectivity with expressionist metaphysics, so must we be suspicious of a cinematic ideology that espouses oppositional or liberatory politics while establishing itself as a dominant, status-seeking—and even bullying—force within the culture industry. Simply, the Pink Film trades in its own “jargon of authenticity,” as its supposedly outré style and content pretentiously raise banal sexual politics to the romantic and “metaphysical” level of auteurism.

If the Pink Film's jargon of mythic perversion offered a means for Japanese new wave directors to turn “their backs on... the naïve universal humanism of the past and search...for the essence of Japaneseness,”¹⁸ as Donald Richie has said, we should not only question such reactionary attempts to essentialize national identity, but also mistrust the attempt to do so by creating an erotic vernacular in which sex and politics are locked in an endless cycle of mutual sublimation, and in which the psychopathically eroticized body *always* allegorizes the sociopathically decrepit political body. This obsession with reconstructing postwar Japaneseness was especially central to the censorship controversy that surrounded Takechi Tetsuji's seminal Pink Film *Black Snow* (*Kuroi yuki*, 1965), which scathes the legacy of the ANPO Treaty and the continual American military presence on Japanese soil. Takechi thusly defended the body politics of his film, the first Pink Film to face obscenity charges:

I admit there are many nude scenes in [*Black Snow*], but they are psychological nude scenes symbolizing the defenseless-

ness of the Japanese people in the face of the American invasion.¹⁹

This brief and seemingly harmless quote captures the representational problems of both the Pink Film and much of what passes for erotically subversive filmmaking. Upon closer inspection, Takechi's vocabulary betrays a common confusion of the Pink Film: the ambiguous word "psychological" is equivocally used as a catch-all phrase to describe phenomena—here, the emasculation of the Japanese en masse by American militarism—that are actually *sociological* (even if the effects of this militarism are distributed and experienced psychologically). Even if Takechi were not misusing the term "psychological," his point would still go unproven, for his statement falsely implies that psychology must be the most legitimate level of inquiry, and that sexuality (here represented by "nude scenes") must be, in turn, the Freudian key which accesses such psychological heights and depths.²⁰

While the knotted relationship between sexual and political repressions has been theorized from Plato's *Phaedrus* through Sade, Wilhelm Reich, and queer theory, it remains ironic that the Pink Film as a whole tended—and still tends—to allegorize conditions of Japanese sociology with (of all possibilities) psychological platitudes and watered-down Freud. If the youthful, desperate killer of Wakamatsu's *Violated Angels* represents a disenchanting generation stripped of its potency by both American neocolonialism and residual Japanese neo-feudalism, he only does so by suffering an Oedipal complex and concluding his murderous rampage of the women who mock his male inadequacy by burying his head in one of their maternal laps. Once Freudian formulae take generic hold and win popular approval and critical acclaim, we come to believe that we are having a serious political discussion by viewing bound, subservient females undergo bodily abuse and by representing political pain, with hardly any stretch of the imagination, as corporeal pain, *without transforming pain into a new content*.

My argument up to this point has been highly generalized, and I freely admit that historically informed analyses of individual Pink Films can yield worthwhile insights into contrarian avenues of Japanese culture. For instance, as Yuriko Furuhashi suggests above in "The Actuality of Wakamatsu: Repetition, Citation, Media Event,"²¹ the topicality of Wakamatsu's Pink oeuvre might not be facile opportunism, as Richie suggests. In Furuhashi's analysis, Wakamatsu's *Sexual Reincarnation: Woman Who Wants to Die* (*Segura magura*:



Figure 26: A father bent on revenge, delivers a young revolutionary his comeuppance in Wakamatsu and Adachi's *Shinjuku Mad*.

Shinitai onna, 1970), which intercuts journalistic images and headlines of Mishima Yukio's then-recent seppuku into a standard Pink Film narrative, doesn't merely exploit topical political references in the manner of *Naked Pursuit*. Rather, Wakamatsu blurs the boundaries among historical events, their media reportage, and their multimedia representation by appropriating and re-photographing original press artifacts, transplanting them from the ephemera of journalism into the "permanence" of cinematic art. Intervening into the temporal assumptions of spontaneous journalism, Wakamatsu not only reveals journalism as a deliberative performance (regardless of its "spontaneity") but also reminds us that the topicality of his films is *supposed* to subvert the alleged "eternity" of art, as he produces scores of semi-disposable films that would have little relevance divorced from their original contexts.

Such a self-effacing critique aside, we are nevertheless left with the Pink Film's problematic basic assumption: that the representation of neurotic sexuality—and not anything else—must be the most incisive tool for antibourgeois agitation. As Burch suggests, however, this monothematic preoccupation with sex is in itself a petty bourgeois illusion. Certainly, Freud's early obsessions with genital sexuality were enough for Jung to part ways with him. Or consider an asexual person: would every self-identified asexual person be automatically excluded from the anarchic or utopian revolutions that Pink Film aesthetics profess? The question reveals not only the absurdity of Pink pretensions but the limitations of any philosophy that defines the heights of pleasure only in sexual terms; indeed, the later Freud eventually abandoned

the genital preoccupation and used the terms “sex” and “pleasure” interchangeably, without privileging sex over any other sort of sensual or intellectual enjoyment.

Since the 1960s, the Pink Film, never a monolithic genre, has undergone numerous permutations, crossing thematic paths not only with Nikkatsu’s Roman Porno but with any number of 1970s and 1980s sado-horrors whose coarsening rape fantasies and infantile heroes are rooted in the Pink Film’s ethos and mythos. By the 1970s, S/M rape scenarios had become less political and more “metaphysical,” fetishizing the submissiveness expected of Japanese womanhood while portending of fleshly secrets only ethereal cinematic projections can magically access. The fixation on rape-induced pain exponentially increased in (to name but a few) Ishii Takashi’s late 1970s *Angel Guts* (*Tenshi no harawata*) series, Takechi Tetsuji’s *Daydream 2* (*Hakujitsumu 2*, 1987), and the films of Ohara Koyu, whose WWII-era torture scenario *Fairy in a Cage* (*Ori no naka no yosei*, 1977) offers a “critique” of decadent Japanese imperialism about as probing as the critique *Ilsa, She-Wolf of the SS* (1974) offers of Nazism. Exemplary of the trend towards an apolitical sado-masochism is Konuma Masaru’s technically accomplished Roman Porno *Wife to Be Sacrificed* (*Ikenie fujin*, 1974), the tale of a bourgeois woman kidnapped and tortured by an embittered ex-husband, who later kidnaps a pair of suicidal young lovers the captive wife is, in turn, forced to abuse. Limning a series of transitive, quid-pro-quo sexual rituals—with an emphasis on hot candlewax and compulsory enemas—the film’s themes of role-playing and domination dispense with the agitationist content of the new-wave Pink Film of the 60s and become political only through the most laborious stretch of allegory.²²

The captivity and domination routines of the Roman Porno have been well documented elsewhere, either with sympathy for the subgenre’s intrepid perversions or disdain for its habitual sexism and pathologization of all human sexuality. Suffice it to say that Japanese sex cinema had little choice but to veer eventually into *mainstream* satire and self-parody. Wada Ben’s *The Perfect Education* (*Kanzen-naru shiiku*, 1999), from a script by Shindo Kaneto, is as good an example as any. The comic narrative of a clueless middle-aged salesman longing to achieve a “perfect melding of mind and body” with the eighteen-year old girl he kidnaps, the film parodies exactly the sort of “transcendentalism” typically claimed by the sadomasochism of both Pink Films

and Roman Porno. The film's salaried molester, an emblem of deviance normalized and industrialized, is soon enslaved psychologically by his captive; free to leave his dingy apartment numerous times, she instead plays her appointed role all too well, humoring a tormentor we know is pathetically bourgeois and tragicomically impotent. At one point, as she nonchalantly sips the sodas he retrieves for her daily, she turns directly to the camera, breaks the fourth wall, and deadpans what we've been thinking all along: "This is really stupid."

The renovation of the Pink Film in the late 1980s and early 1990s has been a project undertaken—not entirely consciously, perhaps—by four directors known alternately in English as "The Four Heavenly Kings" or "The Four Devils": Sato Hisayasu, Sano Kazuhiro, Sato Toshiki, and Zeze Takahisa.²³ In truth, their films share little save the Pink genre's marginal budgets and outré aura, but their work—and by extension the whole Pink genre—more recently has been granted newfound legitimacy through film festival exposure, from showings at Tokyo's Athéné Française cinema in 1993, to multiple screenings at the 1997 and 2002 Rotterdam Film Festivals, to Italy's Far East Film Festival in 2002, just to name a few. As Roland Dominge notes, "The[ir] films received the attention of film critics and a cinephile audience," formed "a refreshing contrast to the formulaic and stereotyped films that make up the larger part of Pink Film production, and are strongly influenced by the notion of the filmmaker as auteur."²⁴ Unfortunately, the auteurist aura of the Wakamatsu cult was our original problem—the worship of the sanctimonious auteur, the master sadist-controller, cannot be our salvation from the parodic abyss of genre, nor does genre filmmaking, in its better moments, necessarily require the legitimation of auteurist elitism.

Even if the directors' kingly appellation renders us masochistic subjects and unwitting accomplices in transnational cultism,²⁵ the new wave of Pink gurus has, in fact, produced some films worthy of a close reading, particularly Sato Hisayasu's complexly (not simplistically) Freudian, straight-to-video *Naked Blood* (*Megyaku: NAKED BLOOD*, 1995) and his earlier gay Pink Film (*barazoku eiga*) *Muscle* (*Kurutta Butokai*, 1988). Despite its trite phallic symbolism and customary Oedipal fixations, the perversely cruel *Naked Blood* has an uncanny power to disturb matched by few films. Nevertheless, the result is always enervating, never cathartic, and the viewer constantly feels like a passive punching bag, like the etherized dental patient helplessly probed and

penetrated in the opening of Takechi Tetsuji's seminal *Daydream* (*Hakujitsumu*, 1964). Meanwhile, *Naked Blood's* female bodies—as distantly ogled by the film's drugged-out, developmentally arrested teenage hero—are a site neither of Rabelaisian liveliness nor of Sadean liberation but of psychosis and despair. Just as the boy, yet another Pink Film loser, forever masturbates for unattainable flesh, so does the audience hopelessly long for what it can never have: the storyteller's mystagogic power to create images that make others yearn (a power analogous to that an adult spinner of cruel fairy tales holds over a child). While the prolific nature and only partial availability of the Four Kings' output inhibits here any full account of their works, let's briefly consider here Sato Hisayasu's *The Bedroom* (1992), Zeze Takahisa's *The Dream of Garuda* (1994), and Sato Toshiki's somewhat less enigmatic *Tandem* (1994).

Starting with the image of an omnipresent phallic camera being blackened out by spray paint, Sato's *The Bedroom* shares with the director's aforementioned *Muscle* an obsession with voyeurism, ritualized framing, and performance, and evincing a sci-fi fetish for chemical addiction, it foreshadows the delusionary self-mutilations of *Naked Blood*. *The Bedroom*, very loosely based on Kawabata's 1961 novella *House of the Sleeping Beauties*, focuses on a heroine increasingly obsessed with the halcyon on which her dead sister overdosed. Her mindless computer programmer husband, meanwhile, becomes so alienated from her that only by attempting to rape her—as might a stranger—can he reestablish physical and emotional contact. Shunning the husband and entering the world of her late sister, she joins a club—the “sleeping room”—where comatose on halcyon she is raped by strangers in front of a giant cinema screen whose rear-projected snow supplies the film with “avant-garde” *mise en abyme* imagery. The film emptily toys with notions of performance and self-reflexivity: the heroine literally writes a script of her own life, she and her partner reach ecstasy only as they film each other with handheld cameras, and a single dialogic allusion to Warhol hopes to imbue the film's ascetic minimalism with some intellectual cachet. But these ideas are never developed coherently, and the degree to which we must feebly guess at their meanings is the degree to which Sato has failed to fulfill his half of the 50-50 author-reader (or even reader-response) relationship.

The Bedroom's eroticism is an array of sadomasochistic platitudes, from a groping session performed in gas masks to the heroine's assertion that when

being accosted she “began to learn that pain is pleasure... and pleasure is pain.” While Jasper Sharp stresses that the gas mask scene likely suggests Cronenbergian contamination metaphors,²⁶ this theme is hardly remarkable—even Hollywood sex comedies of the late 80s and early 90s were suffused with obligatory AIDS panic. Besides, Derek Jarman had already used the image of gas mask sex to far plainer and more apocalyptic effect in *The Last of England* (1984).²⁷ The film’s stale cocktail of fetish club imagery and textbook psychology—including a belabored climax of amnesia and identity reversal—is hardly enough to incite revelation or upheaval in an audience. To the contrary, here Sato’s vocabulary only updates the Wakamatsu-era’s deluded jargon of political authenticity with a deluded—and mostly depoliticized—jargon of erotic authenticity.

Zeze Takahisa’s *Dream of Garuda*—bleakly sincere, witless, and fetishizing rape to the point of blinding infinity—is even more “jargony” than *The Bedroom*. Littered with inserts of avian imagery alluding to the Hindu sun deity Garuda—half-vulture, half-man, just as the film’s hero is half-predator, half-penitent—the film concerns a convicted rapist, now released from jail, obsessed with vengeance on a former victim responsible for his incarceration. He passes the time by visiting prostitutional bathhouses, where he writhes in licentious congress soapy enough to lave his sins and conceal the genitalia forbade by Japanese censorship. Hallucinatorily believing all prostitutes are his former victim, he rapes them in accordance with the unimaginative demands of a genre in which rape, because it signifies everything, signifies nothing. As with many Pink Films shot on rushed schedules, filmed in as few takes as possible, and minimally edited, *Dream* evinces an aching slowness and a pseudo-Antonionian ennui that echoes what Aaron Gerow has identified as new Japanese cinema’s “detached style,” a style that Sharp sees as a deliberately objectivist maneuver.²⁸ When the plot eventually stumbles into its foregone conclusion—the hero, finally confronting his former victim, desires from her redemption rather than revenge—all is sadly rationalized in terms of return-to-the-womb clichés. “Let me be reborn!” he cries, weeping like a repentant child in her maternal lap, much like the Oedipal hero of Wakamatsu’s *Violated Angels*. The rapist-hero climactically commits suicide by leaping from a phallic chimney, whereupon the bird imagery comes full circle. As he falls through the air vulture-like, we are to believe that the hero’s sinful (and Western) pseudopsychology has evolved into the transcendent (and Eastern)

spirituality represented by Garuda imagery, and “psychology” is once again transformed into the vagaries of S/M metaphysics.²⁹

Sato Toshiki's *Tandem* (1994), by contrast, has a sense of humor and happily rejects stifling minimalism in favor of fast cutting, camera movement (god forbid!), and some welcome discontinuities between audio flashbacks and the visual present. Two men, one youthful and one middle-aged, meet as strangers in a bar and challenge one another to share their sexual secrets. As they embark on an uneasy nocturnal motorcycle ride, the cycle's phallic symbolism intervenes, enflaming the rivalry of the older man, who takes the back seat, literally and figuratively. Through a series of comic misadventures, each rider alternatively tumbles from the bike, surrendering the position of driver and assuming that of passenger. As they jockey on the motorcycle for sexual territoriality and dominion, flashbacking sex scenes put the genre through its paces. The older man indulges in the panty fetishism and nonconsensual mass-transit frottage stereotypical of the Japanese businessman, while much-needed rape is provided when the younger man ravishes his cuckolded girlfriend, who (as far as I can tell) secretly fucked the older man. *Tandem's* interest lies in a very Japanese deadpan humor that—like the similarly absurd *The Perfect Education*, Kitano Takeshi's *Getting Any?* (*Minna~yatteru ka!*, 1994), or even the manga adaptation *Weather Woman* (*Otenki onesan*, 1995)—asks us to question a pop culture predicated on sexual fetishism, especially when the film's elder character runs amok manically demanding sex from complete strangers he encounters on the streets. An atypically happy ending further mocks the idea that sadomasochism reflects anything more disturbing than itself and nihilistically suggests that misogyny and competitive violence, once happily sewn into a repressive social fabric, are acceptable norms for a modern Japan.

The recent Pink Film's occasional use of absurdist humor, however, does not excuse its mystagogic posturing, the mute alienations of its “objectivist” style, or the slavishness of its fan base. In fact, the Pink Film's aura of subversion becomes especially dependent on these ingredients when interviews with directors reveal intents more humanistic than vanguard. Just as bourgeois ideology lurked beneath the Freudianism of Wakamatsu's *Violated Angels* and the “psychological nude scenes” of Takechi's *Black Snow*, so does it resurface in Zeze's commentary about his *SF Whip Cream* (2002), a science-fiction satire whose extraterrestrials, according to the director, “represent il-

legal immigrants to Japan, either from Asian or the Middle Eastern countries.” “These people are still very much discriminated against,” he continues, “and this is obviously not a good thing...I wanted to base the story around a character who lacks national identity and is seeking one...”³⁰ While issues of ethnicity and nationhood still plague an ever-homogeneous Japan, the only thing shocking about Zeze’s commentary here is its utter innocence and conservatism. Pink Film devotees longing for Marinettian anarchism, Futurist agitations, or wholesale erotic overthrow would be surely disappointed to learn that their guru is the sort of old-fashioned liberal humanist against whom the new wave intelligentsia once rebelled.

If the Pink Film’s vague corollaries between political insurrection and sexual freedom are insufficient, if its ostensible stabs at upheaval are more impressionist than existentialist, and if its Brechtianism is merely stylistic rather than truly didactic, we must ask anew how erotic art can manifest political rebellion. The Pink Film may be contentious, but its content, frequently misogynous or symbolically Freudian, is hardly libertine—the genre constructs a self-contradictory world where everything is speakable only insofar as it is fetishized. When the Pink Film’s fetishistic connoisseurship is legitimized with a kingly auteurism that fobs off filmmakers’ neuroses as fonts of “pleasure”, we arrive at a masochistic reading of the culture industry consistent not only with Walter Benjamin, Horkheimer and Adorno, and Christian Metz, but with the critiques of pragmatic feminists like Joan Mellen (in *Big Bad Wolves*) and Carol Clover.

The contractual understanding of masochism Deleuze puts forth in his well-known analysis of *Venus in Furs*—in which the masochist abides by the spatiotemporal rules of the dominator—is in one sense widely applicable to the predicament of the film consumer, who pays for masturbatory pleasures defined by compulsive repetitions, limited durations, and diminishing returns (qualities that, not coincidentally, also describe the psychoanalytic couch). As long as this spectatorial contract is inherently capitalistic, it overrides, too, any politically correct qualifiers of sex or gender, for queer audiences are equally ensnared in pacts of passive reception still orchestrated (even in the Internet age) by the corporate economics of video distribution and film festival publicity.³¹ As the demand to consume commercially prescribed images invades every existential crevasse and extends well beyond any set limits, the masochistic contract comes to violate its own ostensible bounds of time and

space, and our overriding discourse of social masochism comes to trump any literary trope or desperate orgasm. We are enslaved to cinematic fantasy not for ninety minutes but eternally and unconsciously, as the cultural phenomenon Adorno called “psychoanalysis in reverse” liquefies egoistic and libidinal desires into a mass consciousness that, addicted to a perpetual flow of cinematic opiates, becomes ripe for fascistic manipulation.³²

It is ironic that the aura of monarchic Pink auteurs should have recrudesced in the early 1990s, at the height of postmodernism and queer theory, when the fetish of the mystified was supplanted with an ethical mandate to audaciously expose. Yet the Pink Film remained content with the acceptable jargon of allegory and the segregation of content and form, conventional procedures antithetical to the wholesale dissolution of (gendered) form imagined by anti-essentialism and gender performativity. Yet queer theory, in its sanguinity, likely overestimated its pragmatic applications, for many of its most salient examples remain content with performativity as a self-conscious, delimited, and ultimately “mere” performance. For instance, Judith Butler’s analysis of *Paris is Burning* (1990), the discussion of erotic performance art in Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner’s oft-cited article “Sex in Public,”³³ or Monika Treut’s transsexual documentary *Gendernauts* (1999) envision sex-gender performativity as circumscribed aesthetic events only tangentially integrated into the larger culture.³⁴

Failing to truly eliminate the conventional distinction between the framed (aesthetics) and the unframed (life), socially marginal performances enacted in delimited *cum* aestheticized spaces cannot disrupt a heteronormativity that, frankly, has blithely resisted postmodernism. Civil rights arguments inevitably default not to objective, unbiased logic but to humanistic pathos, the last refuge of the desperate. Further, queer theory’s basic assumption—that liquefying gender essentialism and cissexual identifications will also liquefy all societal repression—remains impossible to prove when the dominant economic-family unit increasingly absorbs queer citizens and when civil rights victories expand (rather than critique) definitions of normality.³⁵ Rather than enacting a Nietzschean revaluation of all values, we become (dis)content with slight, un-queer relaxations in the total system of repression, sterilely “negotiating” with and “intervening” in culture because we’ve given up on Marcuse’s dream of transcendence.

The disappointments of queer theory are arguably analogous to the shortcomings of the Pink Film: both enterprises begin with the assumption that sexuality is both the foundation of and gateway to the best revolution. Later queer theorists have certainly tried to revise this assumption, redefining queerness in the broader terms of unassimilable differences that transcend self-interested eros and identity. After all, by the standards of American hegemony, a proud transsexual who believes in unlimited capitalism and military expansionism is probably less “queer” than a sexually unexperimental heterosexual who lives as a Jainist hermit and tends to wounded forest animals. The hermit, however, is neither contentious nor activist. Liberated but at ease, he is removed from queerness, which, like Sartrean existentialism, posits not a complacent, static being but an eternal process of restless, revolutionary becoming. Such is the paradox of queer theory’s quasi-utopian aspirations: to the degree that utopianism implies conformity, queerness and perfection are ever at odds. Wrestling with this existential paradox, mind you, supposedly represents the most *liberating* aspects of queer striving. Otherwise, we confront the crushing banalities of alleged “queer culture,” which, like all other culture, is subject to the marketplace and the cult of the false, domineering image (that such images sometimes lurk in the underground doesn’t automatically render them less domineering). In the age of multiplying LGBT film festivals, the preening intellectuality of queer theory has been quashed by a new ghetto of clichés; triviality and humanism are post-queer cinema’s calling cards, and so many LGBT films, like so many Pink Films, welcome red carpet prestige. If queerness is hopefully antiauthoritarian, the phrase “queer auteur” should be oxymoronic—and yet queer cinema is nothing if not auteurist.

Because the politico-sexual realities of queer theory do not necessarily provide an antidote to the politico-sexual failings of the Pink Film, we might look elsewhere, to a theory that exists hermetically apart from culture but also resists the hermit’s complacency. It is thus sensible that we (re)turn to Sade, whose republican libertinage literalizes the sexual politics that the Pink Film reduces to docile allegory, and whose unabashed elitism delivers it from the dangers of assimilation and the clutches of the culture industry (straight, gay, queer, or otherwise). The best representation of Sade’s philosophy—and one of the reasons why progressive feminists continually return to him—remains the revolutionary tract “Yet Another Effort Frenchmen, If You Would Become Republicans,” a mock-utopian, anarchic manifesto inserted in the

middle of *Philosophy in the Bedroom*. The Pink Film, like most generic pornography, argues that (sexual) immorality should be expressed freely in a compartmentalized filmic space that, when separated from the rest of social discourse, permits immorality and morality to live in peaceful coexistence, without disrupting the status quo. For Sade, however, immorality is neither healthfully “oppositional” nor a guilty pleasure to fetishize, marginalize, and ultimately compartmentalize, but an ingredient *central* to the natural state of direct democracy:

The Greek lawgivers perfectly appreciated the capital necessity of corrupting the member-citizens in order that, their *moral dissolution* coming into contact with the establishment and its values, there would result the *insurrection* that is always indispensable to a political system of perfect happiness...³⁶ [italics original]

Sade’s insistence on the need to corrupt will seem needlessly perverse only to those who have never tried to break students out of their inherited conformities. I myself learned the political difficulty—and necessity—of corrupting youth when I was dismissed from a teaching post at Rutgers University for assigning an essay in which students, after reading Chuang Tzu’s “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,” were asked to defend the practice of bestiality according to the Taoist’s negation of societal, philosophical, and personal distinctions.³⁷ Unfortunately, a vociferous minority of pious students took umbrage and filed complaint with the English department chair; their deeply embedded establishment values prevented them from seeing deviance as anything other than a personal attack on their own sense of morality. The notion of an enriching, *positive immorality* was lost on them. For Sade, such a positive immorality not only includes “prostitution, rape, incest, and sodomy”³⁸ but mandates that women enjoy the entire range of freedoms men do—in a true libertine democracy, pleasures cannot be made exclusive. By this logic, children, too, mustn’t be excluded from sexual freedoms and erotica, even if I know well the present impracticability of such solutions, and even if Sade, consummate idealist, likely dreams of a Greece where Socrates did not commit suicide for preaching atheism.

Sadean democracy breaks permanently the contract of diminishing returns between artist and audience, for it equalizes all sexual experiences and subjectivities, including those between creator and receiver. Sade ruptures the

masochistic contract and its static boundaries—sexual and governmental, spatial and temporal—first by identifying the ideal reality as a continuous process of becoming, not a static being as circumscribed as the cinematic frame or as singularly goal-directed as the orgasm. As Sade explains, insurrection must be an everlasting process, not a framed finitude:

Insurrection...has got to be a republic's permanent condition...it would be no less absurd than dangerous to require that those who are to insure the perpetual immoral subversion of the established order to be themselves *moral* beings: for the state of a moral man is one of tranquility and peace, the state of an *immoral* man is one of perpetual unrest that pushes him to, and identifies him with, the necessary insurrection in which the republican must always keep the government of which he is a member.³⁹

From at least a formal perspective, Sade's indispensable state of insurrection may have a passing resemblance to Mao's notion of perpetual revolution, which understood that post-revolutionary classes of bourgeois elites inevitably will surface and require continual overthrow. On the level of content, of course, Sade's republicanism is entirely contrary, proposing radical decentralization and personalization and throwing off every history of conformism. The "insurrection that is always indispensable" fulfills in a rather grandiose sense the "possibility of change" that Angela Carter sees in Sade and not in mainstream pornography; this insurrection also staves off the seductions of normalcy that can overtake queernesses defined by sexuality alone, rather than by more holistic revolutionary projects. In a far less radical way, Sade's belief in the individual to resist the coagulation of state interests prefigures the morality of Emerson, who believed the crowd could only be liberated by dividing up its members and imbuing them with small, necessary rebellions.

In this state of perpetual insurrection, we see crystallized nearly the entire Sadean agenda, a "rationalist anarchy" that, existing beyond freedom and dignity (to borrow B. F. Skinner's motto), understands that true autonomy is incompatible with the complacency of stasis, genre, or climax. Sade's quixotic understanding of rationalism is, furthermore, more pacifistic than sociologists' functionalist or goal-oriented definition, for Sadean rationalism inhibits the very notions of organization and bureaucracy necessary for despotism,



Figure: 27: Sato Hisayasu's *Naked Blood*.

war, and hierarchical religion. Because Sadean logic, a product of the Enlightenment, cannot anticipate or account for the realities of modern economic structures, however, it tends to remain a sublime cultural signpost that, posing alternately as pagan ritual and luxurious satire, portends only symbolic applications and endless paradoxes.⁴⁰

On the one hand, Sade believes that the individual will behave rationally if left uncontaminated by the state and its agents of unreason and oppression, as Octavio Paz suggests in his short monograph *Sade: An Erotic Beyond*. At the same time, the libertine requires intelligible (though not perfectly organized) constitutions because anarchist rationality is both a lost art and an acquired taste. It is thus a necessary (if perversely mundane) act when, as Paz remarks, “one of [Sade’s elitist] anchorites leaves his retreat to write constitutions for mankind.”⁴¹ Sade’s libertine is paradoxically a dejected pariah who, unable to interact with the common man, inflicts his or her sadisms on select fellows deserving and appreciative of privileged politico-sexual knowledge. It is indeed Sade’s elitism that separates his restless becoming from that of queer theory; in this elitism reside the seeds of nihilism and narcissism that separate his polymorphous sexuality from the paradoxically polymorphous queer utopia. Although Sade is as much an aesthete as the queer theorist, his proud dejection and rarefied elitism make any attempt at commodification impossible.

If the Sadean utopia is a restless becoming democratic in its idealizations but elitist in practice, the state of commercial aesthetics, as governed by film production, is contrarily populist in its genre-driven content but elitist in the capitalist-oligarchic institutions required for its legitimation. As a literary “practice,” however, Sade’s work can become democratic in its content as well (which explains why most criticism of Sade tends to focus on his status as *littérateur*, not political scientist). The rosters of theoretical tortures in *The 120 Days of Sodom* and the performative nature of *Philosophy in the Bedroom* can become “participatory” apparatuses for the reader, who continually (re)arranges the Sadean list into a personalized narrative and reads Sade’s absurd stage directions as an imagined performance in which he or she plays all the roles simultaneously. As a performative script, *Philosophy in the Bedroom*—admittedly more than Sade’s conventional novels—thus lies beyond the realm of textual completion and finitude, and therefore allows us to fulfill the culturalist command to be both receiver and creator far better than does the circumscribed, “contractual” frame of the cinema. The “participatory” aspect of Sadean performance reveals that Sade’s language—born of the indignities of the Bastille and far more Brechtian than anything in Wakamatsu’s canon—wants to be played with and penetrated. Sadean language is not an objectified game of cold framing and affected distance, of cultural cachet, of civilizing film festivals, of censored cocks and absent clitorises. In this light, so much of Japanese erotic horror is *anti-Sadean*: the bourgeois violences of Ishii Teruo (e.g., *Shogun’s Joy of Torture* [*Tokugawa onna keibatsu-shi*, 1968], etc.) or of the once-popular *Guinea Pig* video series are a cruelly unidirectional game that renders the audience subservient to the tyranny of the linear, impenetrable image. Indeed, the “sadism” of most allegedly sadistic cinema is predicated on bad or partial readings of Sade, who can never be taken piecemeal—the absolute negativity of *The 120 Days of Sodom* is, after all, only a complement to the sanguine didacticism of *Philosophy in the Bedroom* and the joyful atheism of *A Dialogue between a Priest and a Dying Man*.

Because knowing audiences must reject received wisdoms just as the Sadean hero must negate the constraints of nature and the deceit of God, we must find a new definition of subversion that transcends reliance on objects not of our own making. In an appetitive, consumerist society, such a definition may seem as unlikely as the Sadean gaps between language and politics (and between desire and performance) are unbridgeable. Yet extremity is our only respite from oblivion. For the Camus of *The Rebel*, each subversion that

Figure: 28: *The Bedroom*.

falls short of assassination ideally aimed, at one point or another, for the authentic murderous act. Camus' rather French penchant for hyperbole notwithstanding, it is nevertheless the existential responsibility of committing murder that is weightily moral, whereas every hip, self-impressed "subversion" tossed off by the culture industry is merely an irresponsible, politically correct counterfeit. Camus claims the truth-seeking rebel "does not merely claim some good which he does not possess" but aims to "claim recognition for something which he has and which has already been recognized by him... as more important than anything of which he could be envious."⁴² But if these Pink filmmakers are not poseurs but legitimately rebellious, what is that "something" they possess that transcends enviousness? And even if these filmmakers did possess some alchemical secret and not merely the technical means to manufacture a pretentious fetish, would we, then, become envious of this obscure "something" our pettier laymen's rebellions can never access?

The utopianist's solution would at first seem no more desirable than the culturalist's solution. In a finished utopia, art itself would be superfluous, for the fissures art seeks to fill and social or aesthetic problematics it seeks to address would not exist.⁴³ (Perhaps the utopia is only an intermediary stage itself, for its ennui would prompt us—for purely aesthetic reasons—to re-mystify and sentimentally rehabilitate our problems.) The position of the

Sadean hero in a present-tense state of constant rebellion at least preserves—painfully—the art lost to a world in which all gods, divine and material, have been triumphantly vanquished. In any case, the political art we preserve will never know a monologic authenticity any more than rebellion should know finitude. That there is little hermeneutic common ground among a Dziga Vertov, Dusan Makavejev, Gillo Pontecorvo, Andrzej Wajda, Jan Svankmajer, Jonas Mekas, Michael Moore, or even Wakamatsu Koji is a desirable and natural state of affairs. Nevertheless, we at least need to mistrust auteurism (the tyranny that romantically poses as “nature”) as much as we mistrust genre (the tyranny that poses as “God”) and its various manifestations of pastiche (the “disciples” of God). Fassbinder’s well-known remark, “I don’t throw bombs...I make films,” may correctly identify the artistic impulse to subvert, but it fails to admit that even outsider art creates an institutional culture which, in turn, must be subverted. The solution resides, then, in the Sadean position, in which destruction and creation, the deliverance of pain and the reception of it, become indistinguishably the same act, and in which the libertine hero is not complicit with a culture industry that promises escape from the miseries its own economy creates. As we no longer ask, “What insurrections can be enacted within commercial bounds?” but “What can be done to replace commercial bounds?” we soon realize that perfect Sadean verity: Gods and Kings exist only to be murdered, and on their graves we shall erect a grand uncertainty more truthful than any complacent exaltation.

NOTES

¹ This essay is an expanded version of a 2002 article in *Bright Lights Film Journal*.

² The tautology of pornography is presumed; while porn’s gender- and power-driven sex acts are, of course, ideological in their own ways, and therefore symbolic, pornography needn’t pretend to symbolism or subtext as markers of social, historical, or literary prestige.

³ The import and relevance of queer subversiveness are discussed later in this essay.

⁴ Carter, *The Sadeian Woman*, 3.

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- ⁵ The legalist definition of pornographic “obscenity,” beloved of the grayed American Supreme Court and codified in *Roth v. United States* (1957), is both absurd and sadly appropriate in this context. On the one hand, defining pornography as anything that encourages an erection or orgasm is impossibly provincial, for I’ve had sensations more pleasurable than orgasm while listening to Boito or Prokofiev or feeling autumn breezes. On the other hand, focusing on mechanistic outcomes does correctly identify the materialistic, businesslike interests of the porn industry.
- ⁶ For the purposes of this essay, I mostly put aside the Pink Film’s soft-core timidity, along with Japanese censorship’s irrational masking of male and female genitalia. It should be mentioned, however, that Japanese censorship’s blurring of the genitals has become integral to the experience of all commercial Japanese erotica. Because our optically-centered worldview links visibility to power, and because generic porn is genitally-centered, the censorship of genitalia (in both straight and gay Japanese porn) is a castration, too, of the audience; at the same time, the blurred, mystified groin becomes a blank slate onto which any fantasies transgressive of sex and gender can be projected. Nevertheless, any “liberation” found in this fanciful projection is only the result of the viewer’s elaborate rationalization of power relationships.
- ⁷ Detailed descriptions of the particular student revolts to which Pink Film directors responded are beyond the scope of this single essay. For an overview of the Zengakuren written during the movement’s acme, see *Zengakuren: Japan’s Revolutionary Students*. For an account of the influence the student movement had on particular Pink films, see Sharp’s *Behind the Pink Curtain*, Chapters 6-8.
- ⁸ Because themes of sadomasochism, misogyny, male socio-sexual impotence, true-crime sensationalism, and pseudo-Freudian psychopathology mark both the Pink Film and so many subgenres of the Japanese sex-and-horror market, clear sub-generic distinctions tend to turn on economic rather than thematic distinctions. For the purposes of this essay, I assume the Pink Film is politicized not only because of its ostensible social commentary but because of its marginal low budgets and brief shooting schedules, which separate it from Nikkatsu’s higher-budgeted Roman Porno of the early 1970s.
- ⁹ Burch, *To the Distant Observer*, 352.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 352.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 353.
- ¹² Sharp, *ibid.*, 75.

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- ¹³ Adachi's zealotry soon went much further with his *Red Army/PFLP: Declaration of World War* (*Sekigun-P.F.L.P: Sekai senso sengen*, 1971), an agitprop documentary extolling the heroism of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.
- ¹⁴ See the *Midnight Eye* interview with Wakamatsu at http://www.midnighteye.com/interviews/koji_wakamatsu.shtml
- ¹⁵ See Oshima, "Sex, Cinema, and The Four-and-a-Half Mat Room," p. 250. Oshima's identification of the Roman Porno's hypocritical separation of subject matter (sex) and theme (politics) speaks not only to the topos of the Pink Film but to the inherent problems of allegory.
- ¹⁶ This does not mean, of course, that non-allegorical critiques—like the second half of *Weekend*—are necessarily more legitimate than allegorical ones. Nevertheless, allegory is inherently a mystification (even if it becomes necessary in politically repressive societies). One could argue, for instance, that Hustler Video's literalistic *Who's Nailin' Paylin* (2008)—which involves a lesbian threesome among Sarah Palin, Hillary Clinton, and Condoleezza Rice look-alikes—more effectively critiques American erotophobia than the above-mentioned *Naked Pursuit* effectively reflects the psychodynamics of the Japanese student movement.
- ¹⁷ Desser, *Eros Plus Massacre*, 100-101.
- ¹⁸ Bock, *Japanese Film Directors*, 14.
- ¹⁹ Desser, 99.
- ²⁰ At the same, one wonders what "sociological nude scenes" might look like.
- ²¹ See Furuhata, Yuriko, in this volume.
- ²² This is not to say overt political references disappeared entirely, only that they appeared less tendentiously and self-importantly. For instance, Komizu Kazuo's *Female Inquisitor* (*Gomon kifujin*, 1987), an absurdly brutal tale of man-hating, feministic professional torturers, features an eccentrically Marxist grandfather who laments postwar capitalism. Yet, as is typical with the genre, explicit political references are kept to only a few sentences, which the audience is then invited to over-interpret.
- ²³ Sato Hisayasu and Zeze Takahisa bounce back and forth between Pink Films and mainstream genre films, thereby complicating their "outsider" Pink status.
- ²⁴ Domineg, "Vital Flesh: The Mysterious World of Pink Eiga."

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- ²⁵ The obvious, long-standing Asian film cultism in the West requires no introduction, and the pleasure-seeking fan magazines and blogs and fawning “film journalists” are too numerous to name here. Suffice it to say that Pink Film advertising trades in the same unexamined bromides all advertising uses. For instance, Jack Hunter’s DVD blurb for Sato’s *The Bedroom* meaninglessly claims that the director is “dedicated to exposing the dark void at the heart of contemporary existence” (there’s only *one* void?). *Sight and Sound*’s blurb for the same film more egregiously treads in passé Orientalism: “Only in Japan could a marriage of the porno subculture and avant-garde achieve a breakthrough in the area of hip pop culture” (but breaking through to *what*, exactly?).
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 271.
- ²⁷ A satirical essay could be written about the use of the gas mask as a conventional signifier of “disturbing modernity.” For further evidence, see the unbearably sophomoric *Julien Donkey-Boy* (1999), whose dream sequence of a dancing man in a gas mask is clearly meant to be strikingly avant-garde. Do soldiers, I wonder, ever think of gas masks as fashion statements?
- ²⁸ It is self-evident that more recent Pink Films, like the films of Oki Hiroyuki and much of 1990s-era Japanese independent cinema, adopt a “detached style” of long takes, inscrutable long shots, and/or dehumanized, cipher-like characters; whether or not this detachment forces audiences to work harder to create their own textual interpretations or merely alienates them further is open to debate. See Sharp, 287.
- ²⁹ According to folklore, Garuda hungrily eats a snake every day until a Buddhist teaches him the virtue of abstinence. Presumably, the film’s rapist can only abstain in death.
- ³⁰ Sharp and Mes, “Interview with Takahisa Zeze.”
- ³¹ Despite the proliferation of small (but hardly free) film festivals, the availability of low-cost digital video, and the possibility of Internet distribution, the economics of film distribution remain largely unchanged. Digital video and Internet platforms may democratize low-budget film production and distribution, but they do obviously nothing to guarantee a production’s legitimation, and often detract from it. More to the point, as long as young filmmakers create low-budget imitations of corporate productions, a system of social reproduction arises that only deepens the problem of legitimacy.
- ³² Andrew Arato’s summary of Adorno’s notion of “psychoanalysis in reverse” is useful here; see *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, 18.
- ³³ Berlant and Warner, “Sex in Public,” 547-566.

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- ³⁴ Berlant and Warner's article concludes with a scene of "erotic vomiting" performed by ambisexual men in an underground club—whatever transgressions such an act holds are condemned to the untransgressive, groping darkness. Treut's well-intentioned documentary unfortunately reveals that the economic opportunities available to transsexuals is limited to performing in marginal clubs. For a more sympathetic analysis of the transgressive possibilities of performative pornography, see Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance*.
- ³⁵ The ongoing issue of normalization is, of course, a frequent point of contention in LGBTQ circles, especially as guilt, shame, and irrational stigmas remain attached to abnormality. See, for instance, Michael Warner's anti-assimilationist *The Trouble with Normal* (2004).
- ³⁶ de Sade, *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, Eugenie de Franval and other writings*, 315.
- ³⁷ The Taoist argument for bestiality might be more persuasive than a merely libertarian one, for we cannot determine whether a beautiful horse, goat, or hog can furnish consent.
- ³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 325.
- ³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 315.
- ⁴⁰ The doctrines of Marx and Nietzsche certainly inspire analogous hesitations: it is far safer to offer a Marxist "critique" than to be a Marxist—as Marx himself joked.
- ⁴¹ Paz, *Sade*, 38.
- ⁴² Camus, *The Rebel*, 17.
- ⁴³ The paradox, clearly, is analogous to that of the creator God, who, if he were truly ideal, would have no need to seminally create.

ALL JARGON AND NO AUTHENTICITY?

Marquis de Sade Goes to Tokyo: The Gynaecological-Political Allegories of Wakamatsu Koji and Adachi Masao

Sharon Hayashi

Marquis de Sade's name was becoming well known so I named my contemporary Japanese protagonist Marukido Sadao to get a laugh, but at first no one did. When I went to see the film at the theater, I was saved by a couple of people who chuckled, but the majority of people watching, whether at the theater or at preview screenings, thought they were being shown a serious education film!

—Adachi Masao¹

Pink Sexual Politics

In the mid to late 1960s Adachi Masao and Wakamatsu Koji collaborated on a series of Pink Films that interrogated and playfully parodied discourses about sex and sexual liberation then popular in weekly magazines. Adachi named the protagonist of several of these sexual black comedies Marukido Sadao, a pun on the infamous Marquis de Sade (1740-1814), who alternately plays a sex counselor, gynaecologist, and mad scientist. Reproduction or its suppression in the form of sterility, impotence, and fertility and its control, are recurring themes of these collaborations suggested by titles such as *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* (*Taiji ga mitsuryo suru toki*, 1966),² *Abortion* (*Dattai*, 1966), *Birth Control Revolution* (*Hinin kakumei*, 1966) and *A Womb to Let* (*Haragashi onna*, 1968). In dialogue with popular debates about sex, love, reproduction, women's bodies, and sexual labor, these films present a very complicated and sometimes compromised critique of sexual discourses of the 1960s that simultaneously exploited women's bodies, celebrated sexual liberation, and used the Pink Film genre as a form of political allegory.



Figure 29: A gynaecological examination in Wakamatsu Koji and Adachi Masao's *Running in Madness, Dying in Love*.

In trying to elucidate the relationship of these films to their historical moment we are also placing them in historical narrative that connects with the present moment. Wakamatsu Production Pink Films can help our understanding of the period they were made in, yet this is also a genealogy of the present moment. An examination of the sexual politics of these films does not simply give us an understanding about the past but helps us recognize the framework of sexual politics in our own times. History is never merely a question of the past but how we reinvent it for the present and the future.

It is important to signal that this set of Pink Films was by no means characteristic of the entire genre, in either their themes or their trajectories. Wakamatsu Production Pink Films traveled both nationally and internationally across traditional cinematic boundaries often leaving a wake of scandal and fiery debate. Initially created to be shown as sex films, *Abortion* and *Birth Control Revolution* were also screened as part of an auteurist Adachi Masao series in 1968 at the underground venue Theatre Scorpio.³ *The Embryo* also found its way to the 1967-68 EXPRMNTL Film Festival in Belgium where it was projected with Yoko Ono's *Bottoms* (*Oshiri*, 1966). The exhibition and reception of Wakamatsu Production Pink Films by diverse audiences at various national and international venues in Shinjuku, throughout Japan, at international film festivals, and on the international sex film theater circuit suggests that the impact of their discourses on sexuality stretch beyond the national Pink Film theater. Created at the unusual intersection of the Pink Film industry, the sex education film industry and the avantgarde cinema scene,

the unusual circulation of these films revealed and questioned the cinematic, sexual and political expectations of these various industries.⁴

The revolutionary politics of 1960s Wakamatsu and Adachi films such as *Red Army PFLP Declaration of World War* (*Sekigun—PFLP—sekai senso sengen*, 1971) have been well-documented and have been the major focus of studies devoted to the creative collaboration between Wakamatsu and Adachi.⁵ The emphasis on the astonishingly political uses of their Pink collaborations are not surprising, especially given the unusual extent to which these filmmakers used the medium as a platform to announce their revolutionary ideas. These low-budget Pink Films did not merely tow the party line but in many cases exploited the double attraction of sex and violence to create a critical commentary on the historical moment in which they were made. The sexual politics of these mid to late 1960s erotic films, however, have yet to receive the same careful examination.

The scant scholarly writing about Pink Films until around 2005 and the general refusal to examine the complexity of the sexual politics of these films by most film critics has left their interpretation largely up to the filmmakers themselves, who unsurprisingly celebrate the films as examples of sexual liberation. The self-congratulatory and mostly mythico-autobiographical nature of many of the early histories of the Pink Film industry often confuse the exposure of the nude female body on screen with sexual liberation itself.⁶ While I take an anti-censorship stance because I think it's important to defend expressions of diverse sexualities and sexual practices against the imposition by censorship of normative notions of sexuality, I don't particularly find Pink Filmmakers offering a liberated notion of sexuality despite their self-representation as heroic resisters to the oppression of custodians of national culture and morals. The Pink Films of Wakamatsu and Adachi directly announce a revolutionary agenda, but just as revolutionary politics do not necessarily lead to democratic equality, sexual equality is by no means necessarily a given in their Pink Films either.

It is easy to understand in fact why these films are repudiated for their sexual violence against women. Rape, in particular, is such a constant element one might even call it a generic convention of Japanese Pink cinema. Saito Ayako, Japan's leading feminist film critic, traces the denigration of women in the films of Wakamatsu and Adachi to a kind of Buddhist ideal that depicts women as saviors of men.⁷ In Wakamatsu's *Eros Eterna* (*Seibo kannon daibosat-*

su, 1977) the female protagonist believes she is the reincarnation of a goddess of mercy and gives her body over to men in order to save them. Through the sexual act she possesses the ability to rid a man of his impurities. When a man breaks and enters into her lodging, he loses sexual interest in her when she gives herself to him without a struggle. He begs her to let him rape her and she obliges by resisting him. Here, rape is used as a process of purification for the rapist.

While the misogynist nature of Wakamatsu's ubiquitous exploitation of rape is undeniable, and Wakamatsu is not unique in this regard, rape occupies varied narrative functions in Pink Films. Rather than condemning and simply dismissing Pink Films I am interested in how they represent sexual acts, for whom and how they function in the narrative. Often in Wakamatsu films, rape highlights the powerlessness of a victim oppressed by society. One of the all time highest grossing Pink Films that features a nude women running through snow after being gang-raped, Wakamatsu's *Resume of Love Affairs (Joji no rirekisho, 1964)*⁸ is a melodramatic story about a women from a tiny mountain village who is forced to leave her village after she is raped, only to face a life of slavery and prostitution in the big city where she is again raped over and over. "That was how I was made into a woman," she narrates over painful scenes of rape accompanied by uncomfortable contortions of the screen. Rape is used in the same way as *ijime* or bullying to show the powerlessness of a victim oppressed by society but also the resilience of the individual. At the end of the film, the female protagonist emerges triumphant and spurns her young lover, an ex-student movement radical who has sold out to become a salaryman.

Neither the troubling rape scenes nor the full nudity of the main female protagonist running through the snow in *Resume of Love Affairs* incurred censorship. Yet Takechi Tetsuji's Pink Film *Black Snow (Kuroi yuki, 1965)* made a year later was subject to much harsher treatment by the authorities for portraying a fully naked woman running along the fence of a US military base in Japan. The sensationalist image of *Black Snow's* last scene was an obvious political allegory for US imperialism and the Japanese government's complicity. It would seem that the combination of the political use of nudity rather than nudity itself was considered obscene.⁹

The Sade Trial and the US-Japan Security Treaty

Indeed where one might expect obscenity charges to be filed against images of sexuality and violence (rape), one finds instead the target to be the convergence of sexuality and politics. The translation of Marquis de Sade's novels into Japanese in the late 1950s and early 1960s seems also to suggest that obscenity is an instrumentally deployed and shifting category dependent on the political situation. Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, the novelist, writer and art critic well-known for his affinity for Georges Bataille finished his first translation of Sade's work in 1959 to no great fanfare. Yet soon after Shibusawa published the second part of Sade's *Juliette* in 1960, Shibusawa and his publisher, Ishii Kyoji, suddenly faced obscenity charges. The ensuing trial known as the Sade Trial (*Sado saiban*) lasted nearly a decade until 1969.¹⁰

Why had Sade's work suddenly triggered censorship in 1961? The initial obscenity charge against Shibusawa followed on the heels of the US-Japan Security Treaty (*Anzen hosho joyaku* abbreviated as ANPO) protests of 1960. Originally signed in San Francisco in 1952, the US-Japan Security Treaty forced Japan into the US cold war sphere by installing and maintaining US military bases across the country at the expense of the Japanese government. Despite fierce opposition to the ratification of the treaty in 1960, Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke, who had been charged as a class A war criminal for his participation in the colonization of Manchuria, railroaded the treaty through parliament. The imposition of the treaty on the country against the will of the people ignited massive protests that filled the streets. After the failure of the protests to stop the ratification of the unwanted treaty, many were left deeply disillusioned by the failure of democracy.

It is likely that the anti-authoritarian aspects of Sade's writing were suddenly deemed threatening to the social order as "dangerous thoughts" amidst the wave of anti-government protests. Sade's popularity rested on his appeal as a symbol of anti-politics, or as symbol of eros plus politics for the ANPO generation. According to Shibusawa, "Sade performed the role of a strong antithesis against a narrow meaning of politics. Sade's poison worked effectively to reveal the deceptions of democracy and progressivism. The ANPO generation was attracted to Sade not as a reaction after the setback [of ANPO], but more likely as a kind of camphor injection meant to overcome the setback."¹¹ While the libertarian and anti-authoritarian connotations of Sade's work have been invoked in many contexts, referencing Sade's world



Figure 30: A radiation victim caresses her lover's keloidial skin in front of a poster of Stalin in *Secret Acts Behind Walls*.

view of liberation through Sadism was both a way to show support for Shibusawa in the ongoing obscenity trial and part of a larger struggle to use Sade's philosophy (interpreted in a myriad of ways by different Japanese intellectuals and artists at the time) to find ways out of the political disillusionment of 1960.¹² Together the US-Japan Security Treaty protests and the Sade Trial formed an interlocking part of the sexual-political horizon of consciousness of 1960s Japan.

Wakamatsu realized early on that the mix of sexuality and politics produced scandal, a situation he would capitalize on throughout his career. One year before Adachi came to work for Wakamatsu Productions, Wakamatsu's *Secret Acts Behind Walls* (*Kabe no naka no himegoto*, 1965)¹³ was shown as the official Japanese entry in the Berlin Film Festival.¹⁴ As scandalous as it was at the time for a Pink Film to be chosen to represent Japan, what stands out in this film is the way it showcases sex as geo-political allegory. Two lovers embracing in the bedroom of a drab public housing complex in Tokyo turn out to both be victims of nuclear radiation. As the woman tenderly caresses her lover's visibly scarred and scaly keloidial skin, her own affliction exhibits itself silently as sterility—she is a woman who cannot bear children. As they make love in front of a poster of Stalin, images of the explosion of a nuclear bomb and ANPO protests are superimposed over her look of ecstasy. The nuclear explosion is fused with female orgasm as the explosiveness of popular protests is equated to the moment of her sexual ecstasy. The marred and pleasurable body is the site where international politics play out. The film is a poignant example of how Wakamatsu discusses sexual relations in bed as

part of a matrix of social relations that stretch far beyond the walls of the bedroom.¹⁵

Before working with Wakamatsu, Adachi had also begun to explore sexual-political allegory in a collaborative film entitled *The Closed Vagina* (Sain, 1963).¹⁶ The Nihon University Film Study Club's fourth film, *Rice Bowl* (Wan, 1961) indirectly described the political frustration after the splintering of the left during the ANPO struggle.¹⁷ In this classic tale, the protagonist repeatedly fails to break through a wall no matter how hard he tries, until he realizes that it's really a battle with his own subjectivity. The group continued to engage with the theme of mass political disillusionment after the failure of the ANPO struggle. While searching for an image to capture this feeling Adachi and his collaborators came across the sexual disease gynastresia, the occlusion of the vagina by a thick membrane. The image of a blocked vagina provided a metaphor for the blockage of ANPO politics and oppressiveness of the times.

For Adachi, sexual allegories are not so much about sexuality as sexual illness where the gynecological is mapped onto the socio-political realm. While conducting research for *The Closed Vagina* at weekly clinical workshops led by Takahashi Tetsu, he met a number of patients suffering from various sexual conditions that spoke to a wider social order. One woman who developed a terribly distended vagina, the exact opposite condition of gynastresia, while serving as a prostitute for American soldiers at Tachikawa base was also undergoing psychotherapy after suffering from mental illness.¹⁸ Adachi was greatly influenced by these sessions and would later make a film based on Dr. Takahashi research on the history of sex crimes in Japan entitled *A Dark History of Violence in Japan: The Blood of a Pervert* (*Nihon boko ankoku shi: ijosha no chi*, 1967). Adachi noted that sex crimes in the US at the time were almost always pinned on an individual psychological pathology, whereas in Japan the cause of sex crimes was often understood as a product of environment or society. For Adachi, the sexual was always part of a socio-political landscape.

After filming *The Closed Vagina* Adachi expressed the desire to make an entire series based on the film. The shocking and macabre narrative of *The Closed Vagina* as well as the general lack of funding and distribution for an experimental film series of this type at the time made it an untenable plan. Adachi, however, found Wakamatsu Productions an amenable place to continue exploring his interest in gynaecological-political allegories as a

scriptwriter (*The Embryo*, 1966 and *A Womb to Let*, 1968) and director (*Abortion*, 1966 and *Birth Control Revolution*, 1966).

The Fetus and Fascism

The Embryo begins with an image of a human embryo. The new technology of fetal imagery made its appearance in a wide range of media at the time and was soon adopted by filmmakers. Ultrasound, originally used in sonar detectors for submarine warfare, was introduced in obstetrics in the early 1960s. The first appearances of fetal imagery in popular literature appeared in 1962. The astounding photographic series of different stages of fetal development in Lennart Nillson's "A Child is Born: How Life Begins, The Drama of Life Before Birth," appeared in *Life* magazine in 1965.¹⁹ Adachi wrote the screenplay for and Wakamatsu directed *The Embryo* in 1966. The floating fetus doesn't make its appearance in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: Space Odyssey* until two years later in 1968.

Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* remains the most famous cinematic example of fetal photography from the 1960s, with its now iconic image of the fetus detached from the mother's womb floating freely in outer space. Feminist critics in Europe and North America have linked the increasing dependence on the technology of fetal imaging, or the rendering visible of the baby/fetus, to the increasing view of woman as merely a maternal environment for the baby/fetus, a view of woman as a passive spectator in her own pregnancy. When the embryo is detached and independently captured from its mother's material body, it becomes a subject of its own. The technology of representing the fetus becomes the focal point and the fetal image comes to stand in for technological advancement.²⁰ Of course, the representation of the fetus takes on new meanings in different contexts and changes over time. One trend in more recent depictions of fetuses in North American popular culture is the tendency to give the fetus an independent subjectivity that can, when used by pro-lifers, erase the rights and agency of the mother.²¹ In contrast one finds in the return to the womb in Wakamatsu Production films made in Japan in the mid-1960s, an increasing emphasis on the social relations surrounding the fetus.



Figure 31: The opening image of a fetus in *The Embryo Hunts in Secret*.

The credits of *The Embryo* begin with an image of a human embryo. Rather than move away from the womb, the main narrative motivation of the film is the protagonist's masochistic desire to return to the womb. Although the film bears Wakamatsu's directorial stamp and stylistic signature, both the use of the embryonic image and the main narrative thrust of the film are indebted to Adachi. He had borrowed the still of an embryo from an education film project he had previously worked on. As an assistant director for two years on a Ministry of Health educational film that chronicled childbirth to child rearing entitled *From Zero to Six Years* (*Zero sai kara roku sai made*) Adachi had been disappointed to not be able to film a live birth and became convinced of the need to film his own child's birth. In order to film the "process of a fetus traveling through the birth canal from the mother's womb into this world," he gathered a three-person crew including himself to film his eldest's daughter's birth. He recruited a cameraman, took on the task of lighting himself and hired a lighting assistant. When his wife went into labor, his lighting assistant immediately fainted at the sound of his wife's painful groans. Adachi himself forgot to turn on the lights until his cameraman shouted him out of his stupor and reminded him of his cinematic role in the birth. Even his cameraman was so exhausted by the short but intense experience that he lost consciousness after being thanked by Adachi's wife after the birth.²²

Adachi's compulsion to capture, "that instant a life comes out on this side of reality" was not to provide a frank depiction of childbirth lacking in previous education films, nor to record the intensity of the moment. Nor was it



Figure 32: Directorial credit for Wakamatsu Koji in *The Embryo Hunts in Secret*.

to show the patterns of the optic nerves that overcome trained ways of seeing during the intense, disturbing and joyful experience of childbirth that it was for experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage who filmed the birth of two of his children.²³ For Adachi, the motivation for filming the birth of his child was to re-experience his own birth, “It was related to the desire to return to the womb.”²⁴

In contrast to a reactionary pro-life stance of anti-abortion that romanticizes motherhood, *The Embryo* stages the return of the fetus to the mother’s womb that is romantic and misogynist in a different way. The protagonist of the film, Marukido Sadao has never recovered from the trauma of leaving his mother’s womb, the trauma of his own birth. So deep runs the trauma of his departure from his mother’s womb that he spends his entire life trying to effect this return and to prevent this trauma from befalling anyone else. This includes denying the desire of a woman to be a mother. Despite his wife’s great desire to have children, the protagonist has a vasectomy. When his wife does become pregnant the protagonist is doubly enraged, because he is neither the father nor should anyone ever have to undergo the separation from the womb. He insistently demands to know who the father is and after much bullying his wife finally pulls out a test tube and announces that she has been artificially inseminated. The film’s narrative is replete with technologies of reproduction and contraception.

Our protagonist Marukido Sadao shares a number of beliefs with his namesake the Marquis de Sade. Sade was both a misogynist and a believer in the liberation of women’s sexuality and held a hatred for mothering. For

Sade, contraception ensured the rights of women to free sexuality. It meant that anatomy did not have to equal destiny. In *The Embryo*, artificial insemination frees the woman to have a child without a man. This is just the beginning of the Sadeian theatre of inhuman cruelty, however, which leads to the wife's death.²⁵

Many of Sade's works, such as *120 Days of Sodom*, which we are familiar with through Pier Paolo Pasolini's cinematic version *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975), are a taxonomy of the inhumane functions of sexuality. Pasolini's film transposes Sade's novel onto Fascist era Italy, otherwise known as the Republic of Salò, named after the Northern Italian town which was the capital of Mussolini's German-occupied puppet state in 1944. The film is an exploration of collaboration through the sadistic and sexual exploitation of 18 kidnapped young men and women by four men of power and their collaborators. Throughout the film the four men and their collaborators derive pleasure from the humiliation and torture of their captives in a lavish palace. In contrast to *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*, *The Embryo* is set in an empty space that exaggerates the political allegorical dimensions of the film without setting it in a specific historical period.

Marukido finds a wife substitute who bears a striking resemblance to his deceased wife. He seduces a shoe sale clerk, Yuka, to his barren bachelor pad that contains nothing but a bed and a gas water heater.²⁶ Marukido dons a silk robe, picks up the whip and proceeds to tyrannize his new victim. He breaks her will until she agrees to become a dog. In his mind he is liberating Yuka from her petty position as a salesclerk, seller of an infinite variety and number of unnecessary shoes. Three is the only number she needs to know. A dog, he says, can only count to three. She becomes his dog and patiently waits to be fed, wolfing down the leftovers he tosses to her. But she is far from a loyal dog, and tries to run away from her master/captor. The scene is pure tyranny of man over woman. For the Marquis de Sade, when sexual relations are acted out in a repressive society it results in the political reality of pure tyranny. Leashed and lashed, for Yuka, sex is never equated to gratification but is the infliction and tolerance of pain. The whip is cracked and Yuka howls like a dog. Yuka, however, manages to liberate herself from her authoritarian captor. She leaves the hauntingly beautiful and empty apartment but one is left wondering if she will ever escape the reign of sexual and political terror that awaits her outside.

Wakamatsu is at his best when using sexual relations as allegories for authoritarianism and democracy. Three is the magic number he returns to in *Complete Captivity* (*Kanzen naru shiiku: akai satsui*, 2004) in order to stage the captivity of a young woman who is held hostage by an authoritarian figure. She is chained and terrorized by an authoritarian pervert in a log cabin. A dashing young man appears. He tries to liberate her against her own will, to force her to abandon her captivity. She refuses this liberation from above, what is essentially an imposition of democracy from above. This film made soon after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 projects the violence of an authoritarian regime onto sexual relations. But it also shows the misguided nature of an unwanted “liberation” from an authoritarian regime. In the end both the authoritarian and the so-called democratic figures perish as the female protagonist liberates herself and steps out of captivity. Can liberation from sexual captivity lead to political liberation? Or vice versa. Can the revolution in the streets ever ignite a revolution in a bachelor pad?

Angela Carter argues, “pornography keeps sex in its place outside everyday human intercourse,” yet “when pornography begins to address real social conditions, it ceases to contain sexuality.” Typically romantic pornography works to hide the exploitation and violence of sexual relations.²⁷ In *The Embryo* and other films by Wakamatsu Productions, however, eroticism often veers away from romance and soon turns to violence. Wakamatsu is a filmmaker often accused of both glamorizing political violence, and of conflating violence and sex. But doesn’t erotic violence have the potential to de-glamorize both political tyranny and sexual oppression when the connection between the two is made? The question remains whether Marukido’s reign of terror over Yuka exposes his misogyny and leads to a deeper understanding of sexual and political terror.

The critical reception of *The Embryo* was certainly divided when the film was released. When the film first screened at EXPRMNTL 4 in 1967-8, one of the most important experimental film festivals at the time that brought together the world’s avant-garde artists to a casino in Belgium, a large majority of the audience walked out of the film during the torture scenes. At the second showing of the film the next day, 40 Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) members from Berlin stood up during the screening and shouted, “This is a fascist film! If you have the time to watch this decadence, join the



Figure 33: Marukido Sadao's shock at discovering his wife has artificially inseminated herself in *The Embryo*.

anti-Vietnam war movement!"²⁸ Unfortunately the SDS action wasn't accompanied by a longer critique of what aspect of the film it found fascist.

The scandal fed the notoriety surrounding Wakamatsu. Those who felt Wakamatsu's film was misunderstood came to his defense. Sato Shigeomi who accompanied Wakamatsu to the festival argued that calling Wakamatsu a fascist overglorified him when the theme of the film was much less grandiose:

The protagonist of *The Embryo* is clearly a fascist. When you are firmly bound and made into a dog, can you stand up or not? Is the opposite a possibility or not? This is the theme of the film.²⁹

Other interlocutors also defended Wakamatsu and the film against charges of fascism. In an article discussing the relationship of discrimination and massacre in Wakamatsu's films, Oshima Nagisa noted that the purification through sex and the return to the womb represented in such films as *The Embryo* was criticized as fascism. For Oshima, however, the distinction between fascism and the description of a state vulnerable to fascist politics must be made, with Wakamatsu's films occupying the latter category.³⁰

While Oshima and Sato rightly point out that the portrayal of a fascist protagonist, or a protagonist prone to fascism does not make Wakamatsu or his film fascist, the question remains how the film functions on both a narrative and visceral level in its description of an ever impossible masochistic return to the womb and the ensuing sadistic torture scenes. If Pasolini's *Salò, or*

the 120 Days of Sodom describes the sadistic pleasure of torture by Italian collaborators of the fascist regime, does the reduction of the *The Embryo* to a barren room bereft of direct political allegory make the film more difficult to judge? If Marukido Sadao were a Japanese war criminal, or a vulnerable student radical rather than an anonymous figure, would the direct political allegory excuse the exploitative nature of the sexual imagery? Do one's visceral reactions to torture in the film (disgust, excitement, boredom) line up with one's ethical or political or sexual interpretation of the film?

When the film was shown in Tokyo, audiences were mainly perplexed by the film. Few seem to understand Adachi's sense of humor. Adachi recounts:

Marquis de Sade's name was becoming well known so I named my contemporary Japanese protagonist Marukido Sadao to get a laugh, but at first no one did. When I went to see the film at the theater, I was saved by a couple of people who chuckled, but the majority of people watching, whether at the theater or at preview screenings, thought they were being shown a serious education film!³¹

The disjuncture seemed to be one of generic expectation. Those watching Pink Films that Adachi made for Wakamatsu Productions as sex films were unsure of how to process the heavy-handed pedagogical nature of the films.³² In place of eroticism, audiences were treated to clinical descriptions of sex and the body. Quite aptly Sato Shigeomi likened Adachi's Pink Films to "the smell of death at a medical hygiene exposition."³³

The confusion experienced by audiences was not unintentional. Having made experimental and (sex) educational films, Adachi was familiar with the conventions and limitations of these genres. He used the Pink Film as a way to continue to explore themes he had addressed or wanted to address in experimental and educational films. Adachi attempted to use the word sex as many times as possible in the sex film. In a tongue-in-cheek self-redacted essay entitled "Film Theory Explanation" ostensibly written to provide a theoretical explanation of *Abortion* and *Birth Control Revolution* he reduced the text to a minimum in order to emphasize the centrality of the word sex:

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I always try to talk about my own films. So I always

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..... First about sex.....

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.....
..... Secondly about sex.....

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..... finally it's about sex.

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..... Rather than film, the
films I've made

.....
..... so therefore sex is.....

.....
..... sex film's.....

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.....
.....

..... the es-
sence of sex films.....

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.....
.....

.....
.....
..... I will stop talking about it.³⁴

In other words, Adachi was interested in the discourse of sex more than the exhibition of sex. Adachi knew the parameters of each genre well and he played with them. Instead of showing sex, he spoke about sex.

Wakamatsu gave Adachi free reign to shoot anything as long as it was anti-authoritarian and anti-establishment (Wakamatsu's own criteria for a film). While interrogating genres and the definition of what makes a sex film, Adachi decided along with a good dose of ironic sex education, he would deploy black humor to discuss reproduction and sex in two subsequent films he would direct for Wakamatsu Productions. Accordingly, *Abortion* and *Birth Control Revolution* are both hybrid sex film/sex education films crossed with black humor and a touch of science fiction.

Birth Control Revolution stages Marukido Sadao's return as a sex counselor whose mission in life is to clear up misunderstandings about sex and to educate people about birth control options in a society that still considers sex to be a dirty secret. Bringing sex and birth control into public discussion provide the convenient opportunity to showcase a knowledge of women's bodies, their reproductive functions and their sexual pleasure. The will to knowledge of women's bodies is the pretext for displaying their bodies where a cold and sterile scientific veneer is juxtaposed to the sexual pleasure of women. It is Marukido's research and treatment of "sex as it is lived," or the sexual problems encountered by couples, that provides the most ample occasion to foreground the spectacle of women's bodies and sexual intercourse.

The main narrative thrust of this film develops out of one of his patients complaints that her husband has been rendered impotent by a birth control method.³⁵ After listening to his patient and treating other women for infertility and sexual frigidity he believes may have been caused by birth control, he sets out to invent the ideal birth control device. The society he is dealing with however is not just a sexually repressed society but a society that is repressed by its government and its academic institutions. Both the Ministry of Health (Adachi's former employer) and conservative researchers at a prestigious university indirectly try to suppress Marukido's investigations into birth control. After his untested birth control device prematurely goes on the market and fails, he sells all of his possessions and property to travel around the country to preach his birth control revolution from a minivan.



Figure 34: Marukido Sadao creates an artificial uterus to save mankind in *Abortion*.

Abortion follows the everyday life of a gynaecologist also named Marukido Sadao. At Marukido's sexology laboratory we are introduced to a variety of sexual problems, sexual neuroses, and sexual ills of society through case studies.

Abortion not surprisingly has more of a sex education film sensibility than erotica, especially with its plethora of detailed charts explaining contraception, pregnancy, the stages of fetal development, sterilization, and of course, abortion. This film includes one of the least erotic explanations of a woman's erogenous zones in the history of erotic film. Sato Shigeomi explains the underlying principle of Adachi's gynaecological system of thought: "His notion of eroticism originates in the concept of the device/instrument/container (*ki*) which forms the root of the word genitals (*seiki*)."³⁶ In *Abortion* the genitals are treated like a sexual device. The gynaecologist acts like an instruction manual for understanding and operating this tool. For Adachi, genitals are also a sexual container that reflect the sexual ills of a society.

Marukido as gynaecologist, however, refrains from making moral judgments about his patients. He warns a particularly passionate woman who refuses to use contraception and who has undergone multiple abortions, that her body, not her morality, is at risk. Female sexuality is not a moral dilemma but a political reality. Unfortunately Marukido's solution is not political but scientific. His unpleasant experiences as a gynaecologist lead Marukido to the conclusion that sex and reproduction should be separated at all cost. Rather

than struggling with the political reality of these women's lives, he decides to create the greatest gift to mankind in the form of an artificial uterus.

The science fiction element of this film doesn't quite function as a critical political allegory but trust in medical infallibility is put into question. The gynaecologist is portrayed as a crazy scientist who steals a woman's fetus in order to complete an experiment involving the artificial uterus that he hopes will revolutionize the world.³⁷ In *2001: Space Odyssey* the mini-spaceman fetus possesses the power to replicate himself without the aid of woman. It is just such a fantasy that governs the doctor in *Abortion*. After "growing" the fetus in an artificial placenta in the mechanical uterus, he begins to call the fetus his "child" and names it Future (*Mirai*) for the future of the human race (*mirai no jinru*). When his wife discovers his experiment she reports him to the police and they confiscate his equipment.

At the end of the film Marukido pens and narrates his story from his prison cell in order to ensure that the artificial uterus, "the most important discovery of the twentieth century," is not lost. These delusions of grandeur are reminiscent of the mad doctor in Robert Wiene's expressionist classic *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1920). Was this account of an attempt to transform the world through a scientific discovery also merely the delusional hallucinations of a madman? Or can this obviously false fantasy lead us out of our prison of ideas about sex and reproduction?

Return to the Womb

In 1968 Adachi wrote another script for Wakamatsu Productions that returned to the themes of sex and reproduction complete with an unscrupulous gynaecologist. Although the doctor no longer goes by the name Marukido Sadao and certain elements of black humor are toned down under Wakamatsu's direction, *A Womb to Let* targets another institution—the Japanese household, building block of the Japanese family state system.

In this dark sexual comedy, the womb is no longer the place of return of masochistic desire. Instead the womb is placed at the center of patriarchal structures of inheritance. Who has control over the womb and a woman's reproductive and inheritance rights? Against the background of free sex and orgies of late 1960s Shinjuku culture, the oppressive household of the family

state system is depicted. *A Womb to Let* tells the story of a cunning young mistress of an elderly rich man, who wants to bear him a son in order to become his wife (to be placed in his family register) and inherit his fortune after his death. After accepting his own impotence, he asks his wife and her younger sister to both be artificially inseminated in order to produce an heir who will continue the family name. The plans of the devious wife and her secret lover, an unscrupulous gynaecologist, are foiled when it turns out the younger sister is already pregnant by her own lover and threatens to inherit the fortunes of the elderly man. In haste, the gynaecologist drugs the younger sister and aborts her fetus. Although she represents the swinging lifestyle of the new Shinjuku generation she, like her older sister, cannot escape the consequences of being a womb for the reproduction of the household system.

The most visually striking and violent scene in the film remains the younger sister's involuntary abortion when the black and white film stock suddenly bursts into color. Although there is a moment in the film where a bluish tint is used during a lovemaking scene and many other moments when superimposition is cleverly used, the combination of the blood red color and superimposition of images of the gynaecologist performing the operation and the nauseated older sister participating, is one of the most memorable and visceral moments in all of Wakamatsu's films. Similar to the distorted screen that embodies the pain of the protagonist being raped in *Resume of Love Affairs*, the violent sudden flood of blood red across the screen mimics the invasive violence of the procedure.

The younger sister is a "womb to let," the urban equivalent of the "*baragashi onna*" who in impoverished rural areas would rent their wombs in exchange for food. It is the younger sister's lover who points out her exploitation by her sister as a womb to let. He also facetiously jokes that if she's going to be a womb to let, he may as well become a sperm donor. While recognizing the labor involved in bearing a child, he reduces it to a purely economic exchange ("it's just a job" he says) without tying it to a discussion of non-monetary exploitation. A newspaper delivery boy—a favorite young male proletarian protagonist of Wakamatsu Pro films—he recognizes the depravity of the bourgeois household. The most direct critique of the household system in this film emerges in an early diatribe where he castigates the house



Figure 35: Red blood splattered across the screen emphasizes the violence of an involuntary abortion in *A Womb to Let*.

(*ie*), the household (*katei*) and the family (*kaizoku*) for eliminating the concept of the individual, which he himself represents.

A Womb to Let interestingly links the reproduction of the family to the stability of the nation. For the elderly man, the imperative for an heir and the maintenance of his household is due to his grandiose belief that his household is the building block not only for peace and the nation, but for the world. At the end of the film, the elderly man realizes that he has been tricked by his cunning young wife and decides he would rather not have children and end his family line than allow it to be taken over by this unscrupulous woman. He removes her from his family register and refuses to recognize any children that she bears. The wife, driven by fear, insanity and the shock of having helped abort her own sister's child, kills her elderly lover.

This film emphasizes the centrality of the womb to the reproduction of the household but narrates the breakdown of the family system rather than its reproduction. After being forced to be a womb to let and then undergoing an involuntary abortion, Yumiko is finally free to leave the restrictive bourgeois household and is taken in by her young newspaper delivery boy lover. The woman must suffer but under the influence of the young lover Yumiko is finally liberated from her dependence on the household and its demands on her body. In this film Yumiko does not liberate herself and the hero of the film remains the typically Wakamatsu-ian individual—the proletarian newspaper deliver boy.

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All returns to the womb are political but some returns are more critical and revealing than others. Unlike Marukido Sadao's violent and misogynist return to the womb in *The Embryo*, Wakamatsu Production's return to the womb in 1968 represents a critical interrogation of the family-nation state structure that uncomfortably aligns with feminist critiques of the family state system and emperor system. This critique in *Womb to Let*, however, is vociferously voiced through the young proletarian male hero as the violence of the system is perpetrated on the body of the young female protagonist. The social structures of repression are revealed through the very suffering of the victims of oppression and heroic resistance of the individual.

Wakamatsu and Adachi's gynaecological-political allegories imagine an exaggerated and extreme world of misogyny and masochism where sex and reproduction have gone awry. When Sade was translated into Japanese, his poisonous mixture of the erotic and the political offered a liberatory alternative to the political frustration and disillusionment with democracy that gripped the nation after the failure of the 1960 ANPO struggle. When the Sadeian figure is invoked by Wakamatsu Production Pink Films in the mid to late 1960s he is channeled into the crazed scientist, sex counselor, and gynaecologist Marukido Sadao. Adachi was not merely trying to elicit laughter based on the Marquis de Sade's name recognition. He was also hoping that the heightened absurdity of the films would lead to an understanding of the absurdity of reality itself. Yet the absurdist ending Adachi had originally envisioned for *Abortion* was prohibited by the distributor. After the crazed Marukido is imprisoned and relays his remarkable feat of creating an artificial uterus—the revolutionary key to the future—he turned to the camera and wryly pulled off his moustache. The distributor of the film, however, vehemently opposed being transported back to the absurdity of reality and shouted, "Don't take off your moustache Marukido Sadao. That breaks the diegesis!"³⁸

NOTES

¹ Adachi Masao on *The Embryo Hunts in Secret*, quoted in *Cinema/Kakumei*, 177.

² *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* or *The Embryo* is also known as *Poaching the Fetus*.

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- ³ For a document of this event see the pamphlet, *Adachi Masao to Yamatoya Atsushi no maddo na demonsutoresuhyon*, that contains essays by Adachi Masao, Wakamatsu Koji, Sato Shigeomi, Kuzui Kinshiro and Yamatoya Atsushi, the brilliant absurdist director who entered Wakamatsu Productions at the same time as Adachi.
- ⁴ Adachi participated in a myriad of avantgarde and underground cultural activities. Alongside his cinematic collaborations with the Nihon University Film Study Club, he appeared completely naked in Jonouchi Motoharu's documentary *Hi Red Center Shelter Plan* with artists Akasegawa Gempei and Yoko Ono. He continued to make underground films like *Galaxy (Gingakei)*, (1967) while working for Wakamatsu Productions. He also acted in Oshima Nagisa's first Art Theater Guild film *Death by Hanging (Koshikei)*, (1968) and co-wrote the scripts for *Three Resurrected Drunkards (Kaette kita yopparai)*, (1968) and *Diary of a Shinjuku Thief (Shinjuku dorobo nikki)*, (1969) with Oshima. Wakamatsu was later involved in the production of both Oshima's *In the Realm of the Senses (Ai no corrida)*, (1976) and *Empire of Passion (Ai no borei)*, (1978).
- ⁵ See *Eiga geijutsu* (March, 2000); *Jokyo* (June, 2003); Adachi, *Eiga/kakumei*; Hirasawa, "The 1960s and the Possibility of Radical Underground Film in Japan"; Wakamatsu, *Jiko nashi*; Yomota and Hirasawa, *Wakamatsu Koji hankenryoku no shozo*; Wakamatsu, "I Didn't Care About Movements"; *Boundary 2*, 63-97.
- ⁶ For examples of these entertaining Pink histories see Murai, *Hadaka no yume nendaiki* and Suzuki, *Pinku eiga suikoden*.
- ⁷ Saito, "Adachi eiga to feminizumu," 164-167.
- ⁸ Also known as *Chronicles of an Affair*.
- ⁹ Geopolitical allegory in Wakamatsu Production Pink Films touched on similar anti-American and anti-imperialist sentiments, but focused on the failure of and betrayals within the US-Japan Security Treaty struggle.
- ¹⁰ When Shibusawa finally lost the trial he was made to pay an inconsequential fine that did not merit the loss of one decade of his life.
- ¹¹ Miyamoto, "Sado saiban to sengo no Nihon," 151.
- ¹² Filmmaker and film theorist Matsumoto Toshio participated in a symposium entitled "Sade's Eye III" at Kyoto University in November of 1960. Another Sade symposium, "Is Sade Guilty?" was held at the University of Tokyo in May, 1962. For an informative history of the Sade Trial see Miyamoto, "Sado saiban to sengo no nihon," 146-158.
- ¹³ Also known as *Secret Behind the Wall* and *Secret Behind the Walls*.

- ¹⁴ For a detailed account of the scandal surrounding *Secret Acts Behind Walls*, see Domenig, “Shikakerareta sukyandaru,” 47-84.
- ¹⁵ For a further analysis of this film and the deployment of geopolitical allegory in Pink Films see Hayashi, “The Fantastic Trajectory of Pink Art Cinema From Stalin to Bush,” 48-61.
- ¹⁶ Also referred to as *The Blocked Vagina*.
- ¹⁷ Oshima Nagisa was also greatly affected by the failure of the struggle to stop the ratification of the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1960. His *Night and Fog in Japan* (*Nihon no yoru to kiri*, 1960) became a touchstone for discussing the contemporary political situation.
- ¹⁸ Adachi, *Eiga/kakumei*, 111-112.
- ¹⁹ Nilsson’s images were shot with an endoscope beginning in 1957. Although the images were promoted as showing a living fetus, Nilsson actually used aborted fetal material which allowed him to experiment with color, lighting, and positioning that would not be possible working with a living fetus. See *Making Visible Embryos* at http://www.hps-cam.ac.uk/visibleembryos/s7_4.html. Retrieved on 9/07/11.
- ²⁰ For an excellent discussion of the panoptics of the womb see Petchesky, “Fetal Images,” 263-292.
- ²¹ For an in-depth discussion of the way the fetus is portrayed as an autonomous and rights-bearing individual while denying the woman who carries it any subjectivity see Newman, *Fetal Positions*.
- ²² An image of Adachi’s oldest daughter’s birth later appeared in a 1969 issue of the journal *Le Sang et La Rose/Chi to bara*.
- ²³ Stan Brakhage captured the birth of his first child in 1959 in *Window Water Baby Moving* which was often screened with George Stoney’s 1953 educational film, *All My Babies*. See MacDonald, *A Critical Cinema*, 64-66.
- ²⁴ Adachi, *Eiga/kakumei*, 245.
- ²⁵ For a provocative discussion of sexuality as terrorism which inspired this reading of *The Embryo* see Carter, *The Sadeian Woman and the Ideology of Pornography*.

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- ²⁶ Noël Burch describes the pared-down cinematography of the barren room of *The Embryo* in *The Distant Observer*: “The film is shot in raw, black-and-white ‘crime magazine’ style, in which the only glimmers of comforting sophistication—of ‘aesthetic distance’—are the periodic long-shots from outside an open doorway. These briefly remove us from the horrific centre of the diegesis, bracketing the torture scenes which are the film’s only narrative substance. However, even such elementary structural concerns as this are incidental to Wakamatsu’s work at this period. For he was, and in a sense has remained, a primitive: he had learned the rudiments of ‘film grammar’ and still relied on them completely,” 351-2.
- ²⁷ Carter, *The Sadeian Woman and the Ideology of Pornography*, 3-37.
- ²⁸ Sato, “Burasseru jikken eigasai to sono sukyandaru.”
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.
- ³⁰ Oshima Nagisa, “Sabetsu to satsuriku,” 48-49.
- ³¹ Adachi, *Eiga/kakumei*, 177.
- ³² When *The Embryo* was invited to EXPRMNTL 4 in Belgium, Sato noted the strangeness of a Pink Film being shown amidst serious avantgarde fare, most of which he seemed nonplussed by.
- ³³ Sato, “Shikusai tadayou eisei hakurankai,” 17.
- ³⁴ Adachi, “Eigaron josetsu,” 3.
- ³⁵ Although abortion was legalized in Japan in 1948, the birth control pill was not approved for use in Japan until 1998, after the approval of Viagra. For an extended discussion of postwar reproductive rights in Japan see Norgren, *Abortion Before Birth Control*. In 1948 Socialist MPs advocated abortion rights because they anticipated the increase in population due to repatriated soldiers and colonialists returning from the empire, the danger of illegal abortions and the genetic legacy of the atomic bombs. See Hardacre, *Marketing the Menacing Fetus in Japan*, 56.
- ³⁶ Sato, “Adachi Masao to Yamatoya Atsushi,” 6.
- ³⁷ The image of the corrupt and money-grubbing OB/GYN may derive from 1957 when the National Health Insurance System began encouraging physicians to accept unreported cash payments for abortions.
- ³⁸ As related to me in a conversation with Adachi Masao at an all night memorial screening of Wakamatsu Production films on November 23, 2012 at Teatoru Shinjuku in Tokyo.

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SAS

Pink Feminism?**The Program Pictures of Hamano Sachi***Miryam Sas*

The idea for this chapter began with a rather simple, second-wave feminist impulse—to include the single most prominent veteran female director in a compilation about Pink Film. Furthermore, this director makes explicit claims in her promotional materials and published writings about her goal of taking a “woman’s perspective” in depicting sexuality in her works.¹ Now also a director of the mainstream festival-circuit film *Lily Festival* (*Yurisai*, 2001) and her grassroots-funded *In Search of a Lost Writer: Wandering the World of the Seventh Sense* (*Dai-nana kankai hoko: Ozaki Midori o sagashite*, 1998) and its sequel *The Cricket Girl* (*Kohorogi-jo*, 2006), Hamano Sachi began her career in 1968 at the age of twenty when she joined Wakamatsu Productions. By 1971 she had directed her first Pink Film, *17-year Old Free Love Tribe* (*17-sai suki suki zoku*).² She is mostly known, then, for her over 300 (by some counts) Pink “program pictures,” as she herself calls them.³ It seemed an intriguing project to return to the roots—via the early films—of this director whose take on sexuality foreshadows the later emergence of so-called “pro-sex”⁴ third wave feminisms at this early moment in the formation of the genre of Pink Films.

The failure of this first version of the project—the idea of writing on Hamano’s early work—was not without its significance.⁵ As Hamano stated, these sexploitation/eroduction pictures, produced under constrained budget conditions and in a limited time frame, though filmed in 35mm, were literally projected and projected to the point of their own physical destruction; and when they would no longer play, when the films got old, the works and their negatives were “junked.” This junk-treatment in some ways emblemizes the place of the genre within Japanese film⁶—the “body” of the film exploited to the point of ruin, no longer of use when it gets “old,” in the model of an ever-replaceable or renewable profit-making commodity. Hamano herself, in

her own conception of her Pink Film productions, seems to depart from an “auteurist” model (espoused so notably by Wakamatsu), in which there might be some kind of carefully held and curated archive of the films. As she describes, the role of the director in Pink Film—and she has directed extensively for most of the companies that remain the major distributors—is a “contract” role (*keiyaku, shitauke*): although since 1982/4 she has been the director of her own production company, Tantan-sha, it is the distributors who hold physical possession of the film after it is completed: “after the goods are delivered that is the end [for the director]; that is the kind of contract the Pink Films are made under.” Hamano thus describes the structure of Pink Film power dynamics and guides how a scholar might “think” Pink Film—that these issues of production and commercial contractuality, in addition to rights and physical possession, should be central in any reading of the genre, as much as or more so than any auteurist or political reading of the sexuality depicted therein.

For many directors, Pink Film was an answer to the question of how to make films—how to get a film made—at a moment of crisis for the studio system and the new dominance of television, and not least so for one of the first emergent female directors in this male dominated industry. It has been often noted that the broad cultural and social transformations of Japan in the 1960s-1970s, including the revolutionary politics that would make the Pinks so interesting an object of study in the works of Wakamatsu and Adachi, nonetheless profoundly failed to address the gender and sexual inequities that were a fundamental element of Japanese social structure. Even with the promotion of themes of gender equity in Occupation-era films, and the introduction of the Hollywood code era “kiss scene” to mainstream Japanese cinema, many aspects of the fundamental social structures of gender and sexuality remained unchanged and scantily theorized at the time when Hamano began to direct.⁷ While political and artistic groups in this period worked to overturn many aspects of the institutional and bourgeois status quo, they often functioned in practice as male-centered hierarchical institutions or as collectives of male “subjects.” As film scholar Saito Ayako succinctly puts it in terms of some films of this period, the revolution was often problematically envisaged to be carried out “on” or “through” or “via” the female body.⁸ Sexual violence against women in cinema thus became a key figure for the male subject’s revolt against institutions of power, and for the rupturing of conventions of thought. At around the same time that such

films were being made, British and U.S. feminist film scholarship framed arguments about the use of the female body in classical Hollywood cinema as the “bearer of meaning.”⁹ While they break many of the accepted frames of classical narrative form, in the experimental “new wave” Japanese films of this era, notably those of Oshima Nagisa,¹⁰ the revolution often does take place in some way “on” or at the expense of the body of the woman, and thus it is perhaps not so surprising—and not so distant from what was happening in other cinematic realms—that it might have been possible to meld revolutionary politics with the violence of Pink sex films.

In her recent *Screening Sex*, Linda Williams returns readers to the horizon of the late 1960s to early 1970s in the U.S. in order to recall the pressing questions of the era of “make love, not war,” and specifically the questions, posed in film, of what *kind* of sexuality would be the one that might be seen to embody the powerful political effects this slogan implied. What could be the kind of “love” that should be practiced by the young women who aimed to resist war and “instrumental reason” during that time?¹¹ Pressingly, in the rhetoric of emergent feminist discourses, questions of female desire and female pleasure emerge.¹² Although my project of exploring Hamano’s work of the same period ran aground against the “junk” status of these program pictures, Hamano’s own later description of this early work seems to be very much in alignment with some of the goals implicit in Mulvey’s famous essay a few years later. The implication is that variously defined “male”-centered cinema contains in its very forms the objectivization of the female body, and that Hamano wanted to try to overturn some part of this relationship. (For Mulvey, the focus is the implicit male gaze structuring illusionistic narrative cinema; for Hamano, it is also the material conditions of cinema at the level of production structured around a male director, within a cinematic form aimed at male audiences.)

17-year Old Love Tribe, the first film she directed is, according to Hamano, the “story of a vagrant girl’s personal growth through the experience of sex chosen by her own will.”¹³ While the desire to *see* or visualize female desire is also a frequent and generic male fantasy (thus adding a layer of generic ambivalence to the political claim), Hamano writes of seeking an actress among Shinjuku bars and casting a girl with half-Indian blood who had never acted in films because “I wanted an actress who was *not familiar with male ways of direction*.” In 1967, Suzuki Seijun had cast the half-Indian Mari Annu as a par-

adigmatic beauty and femme fatale figure in *Branded to Kill* (*Koroshi no rakuin*): she too is figured as a powerful woman character in visual montages of butterflies, fascinated with death. At this moment in 1970 the choice of a half-Indian beauty to play the emboldened subject of sexual desire thus might have resonated with the precedent of Suzuki's film. In any case, if an actress "not familiar with male ways of direction" is imagined (if retroactively) to challenge the expected conventions of sexual representation in cinema (by her "authenticity"? her non-Japanese sexuality? in some ways by her very "rawness"?), metaphors of virginity are not far off, with Hamano glossing, "I wanted an actress not dirtied by the hands of a male director." By this argument then, Hamano *as* a female director would claim to "direct differently,"¹⁴ as she writes: "At that time, I was not clearly conscious of it, but I think that by depicting the figure of a woman who wrestles with [faces] sex of her own will, I wanted to provide for a subject-object reversal. The figure of a heroine who desires subjectively (*shutai-teki ni*) and acts resolutely became a basis for my later work."¹⁵

Key here are the conceptions of subjectivity: what would it mean to portray a woman desiring and acting "subjectively"? Does this echo the questions on the horizon of "what kind of sex would be right for making love not war"? Hamano does not refer here to the war context, but the term itself (*shutai*) not only signifies "independently" but also connects to the debates about postwar subjectivity that played such a key role in all the artistic and political movements of the 1960s-70s. These subjectivity debates operated in a range of different theoretical framings of the arts, from the late 1960s avant-garde artists' participation in or protest against the 1970 World Exposition in Osaka (*banpaku*) to movements like *Provoke* in photography, to the practices and analyses of documentary filmmaking at the time (Matsumoto Toshio, Hara Kazuo and others). By casting a "non-actor," Hamano—in addition to considerations of cost in what is, after all, a form of sex work—may be appealing to a documentary impulse. For example, in just the same period documentary filmmakers like Hara Kazuo were working with their own inversions of the subject-object relationship, often with scenes of explicit sexual acts (like in *Extreme Private Eros: Love Song 1974* [*Kyokushiteki erosu: koiuta 1974*, 1974]) that theorize various transformed relationships between filmmaker, here as male sexual subject, and "object" in the frame (Takeda Miyuki having sex, giving birth). Clearly, this formulation by Hamano is a retroactive gesture, framed in the context of hindsight on that

period. One still needs to ask the question of what it means for a (paid) “subject” to engage in (simulated/censored) sex acts before a camera in the guise of a *character* who is to be shown as acting boldly and freely on her own sexual desire, for a male audience. Nonetheless, as Hamano notes, the themes of female sexual desire and bold iconoclastic acts (on the part of the characters) do continue to be a key foundation for her work ever since, and may even raise some parallel questions today to those they raised in the 1970s.

Even if the inversion of the subject-object relation were not explicitly theorized by Hamano within the film work in the 1970s, the portrayal of “female subjective desire” and bold proactive sexuality, combined with the scopophilic/exhibitionistic use of these works—the forms of their reception and their providing of ample “female objects” for consumption—appears at first glance to create a rather daunting contradiction. Hamano takes explicit note of this problem as a “misunderstanding between myself and those customers and theater owners.”¹⁶ She calls it a “fortunate misunderstanding” (*shiamase na gokai*) in that it allowed her to continue making these films. But this contradiction or misunderstanding goes to the heart of some key issues in feminist film criticism—issues of how to read pornographic film in relation to questions of the politics of sexuality, as texts or in terms of patterns of consumption. The “misunderstanding” may simply have been part of the fundamental ground or reason that it was possible to make any interesting Pink Films: as long as certain number of sex scenes were provided, the directors and filmmakers could fill out the rest in whatever message they liked. (After all, this viewpoint goes, it was not to hear the message that audiences were coming to see these films. They were not known even for watching the films straight through, but for wandering into the theater in the middle of one and leaving at any point partway through, a practice still prevalent in Pink theaters.)¹⁷ The “misunderstanding,” in other words, goes rather far into a real question about Pink Film: for what is one watching? Where is the audience’s desire? If one cannot fully answer these two questions except by tautological assumptions (the audience wants to watch naked women’s bodies in simulated sex acts—though I attempt to address the questions a bit more fully below), it does become instructive, and potentially queerly complicating, to hear Hamano’s description of her own desires as a director.

In 1984, thus over a decade after her directorial debut, Hamano met Yamazaki Kuninori, who came to be her primary screenwriter, both for her Pink and non-Pink Films. He had read Japanese feminist critics of the 1980s and wrote her “feminism-influenced” screenplays; at that point she started her own production company. Up until then, she had worked with Adachi Masao and Yamatoya Atsushi briefly, including working as third assistant director on Adachi’s *Sex Play* (*Seiyūgi*, 1968), and then gone freelance to work with a range of other directors and companies after she quit Wakamatsu Pro. Subsequently she had to do a lot of cooking and laundry for the male staff even while working in Pink Film productions. But by her own account the definitive moment for Hamano’s directorial career came with the discovery of the extreme close up that she learned from Motoki Shojiro, who had been a producer of Kurosawa’s films but “fallen” to Pink Film. She worked as his assistant director: in her description, he would film extreme close ups (*do-appu*) in order to have his hands play on the screen, editing close-ups so no one could tell the hand was not the actor’s but Motoki’s.¹⁸

That this was an improvement over the treatment actresses received on other sets she had seen, and that today it is rather uncomfortable to read about a male director, bespeaks the relations of exploitation that clearly prevailed in the low-budget production world of the time.¹⁹ But Hamano quickly (and perhaps symptomatically) re-distances the practice for her own work to call this technique, in her adoption of it, a “materialistic close-up of bodies.” In her work, the touching is done not by the director’s own hand but by the camera, in a way that nonetheless “queers” her identification with the desiring gaze—or shows the always already perverse structure of this identification.²⁰ Her articulation highlights that “haptic” aspect of cinema where the visual and auditory stand in for touch, most dramatically (and perhaps most inadequately) in cinematic genres like porn where touch is in some sense “all there is” (to see, to hear). As Hamano writes:

Pink Film makes sex into a commodity, and has to incite sexual desire in the audience. [...] But from a certain point I myself I began to love the women inside my images. At that point, the male actors became my dummy, or my hands, and stroked the female bodies. The method I have of filming extreme close-ups of the particulars of a woman’s body, as if to lick them, made me a strong seller in the business, but it was

also perhaps an unconscious exhibition of my own Eros toward women. [...] For me on the one hand, Pink Film was a battleground against male-centered sexual values, but at the same time it was also a visual caressing of female flesh.²¹

Hamano writes that she aims to portray female sexuality directly (*onna no sei*), to shoot bodies in extreme close-up shots in a “materialistic” way (a way that stands in opposition to the “illusionistic” [*gensotekiz*] way she describes of male directors who mythologize or mystify the body in the attempt to imply a hidden, deeper meaning [*imiarige ni*]).²² Hamano’s method attempts to reduce the “depth” level to degree zero, to get rid of illusionistic projections or mystification in favor of what she calls “squarely facing” female sexuality. Thus, her method articulates the effort toward a kind of “direct encounter”—over and over, as it were, in a way that is infinitely repeatable and in some way infinitely in need of repetition—with that which, ultimately, cannot be “seen.” She articulates a kind of queer “visual caress” of the camera on the fragmented “flesh” that invokes a complex, dialectical structure of identification (with the male director) and at the same time performs a confession of an emergent directorial “desire,” one structured and inscribed by the cinematic act itself.

Williams argues (with Comolli) that the aspects of the tactile that cannot be “seen” provoke a “frenzy of the visible”;²³ and she also notes the “mechanical” quality to the repetitions—indeed the mechanical, the technology of cinema itself, might come into the equation as a kind of allegory for the commodity form of the sex film (junk) and the repeated, quantifiable, countable sex acts that stand in for the uncountable, difficult to grasp, impossible to see obsession that is female sexuality to the (male?) gaze. In practice, the fact of Eirin censorship creates a situation that is ontologically somewhat different from the ways things stand in the American porn debates’ distinction between hard core and soft core. Where, at least in Williams’ 1989 analysis, soft-core eroticism was put forward by some feminists as the “female” alternative to hard-core porn (and then countered by some feminist-produced hard-core), the image of “soft” eroticism by no means seems to fit (at least for this viewer) the kind of porn that is Pink Film. One might rather term Pink “censored hard-core,” a version of hard core conditioned by a specific set of censorship conditions: that is, the substitution of dildos for penises during some scenes of fellatio, the continual presence of clean white

underwear briefs that the female stars lick, and the wearing of underwear by the actresses (often, in post 1991 films, with transparent lace); the absence of the “close ups of insertions or money shots” that characterize hard core because of censorship in the sex scenes.²⁴

These things make Pink Film technically “soft-core,” but I would argue that the organization of the sexuality portrayed is aimed at maximum (allowable) visibility and a “thrusting, jabbing”²⁵ form of sexuality for the most part in a direct line from hard core. (Is this the “dissolved hard core” that Williams writes of?) In any case, there are arguments to be made on both sides: the absence of hard core signature shots means that the “phallic centeredness” of hard core—one might argue—has the potential to give way to a more dispersed, polymorphous form of sexuality—like Warhol’s *Blue Movie*, though hard core, that shows languors and slowness, anti-teleological moments. But the market of Hamano’s work (though she emblemizes a self-conscious model of mass production à la Warhol) does not allow in cultural context much of this dispersal, if any, inside the temporally dominant sex scenes of the films themselves. This remains a phallic, “thrusting,” teleological form of sexuality: sex acts include numerous instances of (usually underwear) oral sex, and (simulated) penetration (often with the woman on top).²⁶ Like in hard core, the music gives way to raw soundtracks of moans and groans, long-dominant sequences within which, by the end of each film, almost every actress will be paired with almost every actor, either in a sequence in the narrative or in a visualized fantasy of one of the characters. The key emphasis here may be the terms mobilized by Hamano’s distributor Fukuhara as well as by her viewers, both positively and negatively (in her own description): they see her as a “craftsperson,” an “entertainer.”²⁷ The “handicraft” metaphor might partially attempt to take her out of the realm of global commodity capitalism (in which she manifestly participates); but it also takes into account the seeming incompatibility between her feminist interest in a “*onna no sei*” (female sexuality) and the demands of the commodity form, however crafted.²⁸

In websites that currently sell Hamano’s work for Windows Media download (significantly not fully globalized in that they require a Japanese credit card and IP address), these fast production commodities are categorized among the others of their genre by fetish category: by “profession” (nurses, stewardesses, teachers, widows, older women, housewives; hot springs, com-

panion, prison guard, hairdresser, bank clerk); or by “violence type” (rape, discipline, SM, bondage), and many more. “I was seen as a ‘craftsman-like’ overproducer of too many works using harsh portrayals and only sex scenes (*karami*),” writes Hamano, citing her manifest speed as a reason for her multiple pseudonyms as a director, to mask the sheer volume of her productions. Thus, the level of the individual work is not, perhaps, memorable and not meant to be memorable? Rather, the viewer gradually accumulates a database of what might be called, in otaku jargon, *moe* elements:²⁹ certain actors, the comic oral sex and innocent silliness of Yanagi Hidenori, the skillful intra-scene direction and waving-hair paroxysms of Kagami Reiko, which have continuity from film to film, no matter the character or ostensible storyline. The works are clearly “classified” here as recreationally consumable (and rather affordable) objects, with discretely cool-voiced women on the phone assisting with any difficulties in the credit card transactions.

In the era of “small narratives,” the focus on “localized intensities,”³⁰ Hamano’s position as a director and specifically her Pink Film works play a symptomatic or liminal role. The films I was able to view for this article all date from the last ten years, and hence show—while manifestly continuing the themes and techniques discussed above—the signs of being a part of a very different ideological and commodity culture, one in which Pink Films have tentatively opened toward female audiences and more general audiences (though, as Hamano points out, the main theatrical audiences remain men over the age of fifty who have wives and daughters at home and so cannot watch adult video at home).³¹ They also, as I mention, have moved in part from the public theatrical settings of the Pink theater circuit to more private screens. Thus, one finds some key themes that would have played well with 1970s U.S. feminisms (women finding their desire) and some themes that are particular to this later moment (internet prostitution, otaku *hikikomori* or “shut-ins,” video sharing by cell phone and internet). Some films, even most films—and here the screenwriter Yamazaki Yoshinori also deserves credit—manage oddly to walk the line between, and ultimately to combine, typical male genre fantasy and “women’s liberation” message. In the next section of this essay, I examine key scenes from several of these films, in order to understand the workings of these apparent contradictions, Hamano’s so-called “misunderstanding” as it functions in the specific visual and narrative rhetoric of her cinematic works.

Rather than reading a single film in isolation, it is probably more true to the production style and consumption practices of these films to consider them *as* part of the genre, *as* program pictures that exist in the form of serialization.³² The seriality of these films is a key part of their functioning. In some ways, they can be seen to *literalize* Azuma Hiroki's theory of the post-modern otaku database: they exist in order that their individual elements (*moe*-elements, as it were, but here in live cinema rather than animation) might be "collected into a database": the contrast of the "hot" mode of experiencing affective moments of desire provoked by these elements (including the desire to watch more of the same, variants on the same) and the "cool" collector's mode comes into play here, at least for certain viewers of the era of P*G and Pink Grand Prix.³³ The same actors (and character types, and sexual positions and acts) appear again and again. The aim of this piece is neither to present an apologia for Pink Film (in relation to Hamano's feminist claims) nor to criticize or "debunk" those claims, but to take stock of the kinds of productive contradictions that are staged by these films and to consider their theoretical significance, whether or not they in fact constitute contradictions at all or require an altered mode of reading of commoditized sexuality.

If "good" Pink Films (for contemporary scholarship on Japanese cinema) are those that show the strongest "individualism" of the *auteur*, like Hamano's former assistant director Meike Mitsuru's *The Glamorous Life of Sachiko Hanai* (*Hanai Sachiko no karei na shogai*, 2004), and ideally also have the strongest and most direct political messages and critically engaged stance toward the mass media (like Wakamatsu/Adachi), if possible by seeming rather indifferent at times to their own sexual content except as a material condition for filmmaking³⁴—then Hamano's works fall in a complex way outside these easier "redemptions" of Pink Film. Hamano's political messages have directly to do with sex: in relation to marriage, sexual violence, or as a journey of "self-discovery." They fulfill the conventions of the genre "to a T": as one blogger puts it, "precisely" (*kicchiri to*), "exactly" (*kichin to*) "showing what they are supposed to show" (*shikkari miseru*).³⁵ The sex scenes are *long*, take up most of the film (as in much porn), and are obsessed with making their acts *visible*, within the censorship constraints. Viewers comment on the choices of underwear as much as (and sometimes with more interest than) on the story. A strong majority of the shots of the film carefully (again that word) include full frontal nudity. What becomes, then, of the feminist claims in this context, or how do they relate to the "direct confrontation with female sexu-

ality” Hamano-type work is said to perform? Is *this* the confrontation? Is the very “materiality” of the “flesh,” the very “materialism” of the close up shots showing us something about transformations in the sexual as well as the commodity domains, giving viewers to experience the fragmentation of affective spheres and “impersonal intensities” at a moment of the waning of centered notions of subjectivity? Or is this ultimately too complex a reading, and is the “confrontation” aiming mainly at the reinforcement of the “subjective” acts of bold female characters?

Jasper Sharp and others seem simply or partly baffled by the feminist claims, saying that “if anything, Hamano’s work is lewder, ruder, and cruder than most in the genre,” and that if anything the over-preponderance of lascivious females in the films “offer a view of female sexuality that is so over-the-top it comes across as threatening.”³⁶ Others wonder if the middle-aged and distracted male audiences wandering in and out are actually “getting” any feminism out of the viewing of these films. These readings come down again to the productive “misunderstanding” between Hamano and her audiences and fans, who are not too shy to criticize a film if it does not “deliver.” The critique, then, here, should be located more on the level of the surfaces presented, and in the relationship between Hamano’s presumably “complete commodity,” her “materialistic” shooting style (which she contrasts to the mystified “incomplete” commodity of male directors) and the various visions of sexuality that can constitute a feminist film practice.

If the sexuality is to be “subjective” (*shutaiteki*), to effect an “inversion of subject-object relations” in more than a most literal sense³⁷—to show a sexuality “in the control of a bold subject”—one film to consider is Hamano’s recent Pink work, *Pervert Syndrome: Indecent Daydreams* (*Hentai shindoromu: waisetsu bakuchumu*, 2008). In heteronormative Pink Film pornotopia, women are almost always (quickly) interested in sex, all the characters eventually couple with one another, characters always reach climax, even while everyone is always wearing carefully chosen undergarments and always perform for maximum visibility for the camera.³⁸ In Hamano’s world, rape is always (if strangely) avenged or punished, and women always discover the potential of their desire, preferably through the mentorship of another more “enlightened” woman. The difficulty arises because this desire to “see” and grasp “what a woman wants” (female desire) is also a primary male fantasy. Hamano writes, in a moment alluded to above:

Was not Pink Film the only genre that faces “sex” directly? I was going to depict “woman’s sexuality” with precision (*kichin to*). The female sex depicted by male directors only showed an “illusory woman” (*genso no onna*). I took the female flesh which they had only taken as if it had hidden meaning (*imi-arigae*) and faced it directly, in extreme close up, and filmed it materialistically (*sokubutsuteki ni*). It was a statement of challenge to the male directors who don’t know, but like to mystify, female sexuality.

The fantasy of “knowing” is a crucial one from Freud through hard core pornography: the male scopophilic desire to know the “truth” of female sex, the desire over and over to watch, as if watching would lead to knowing. If in most Pink works, as Hamano claims, “Women’s bodies are either tattered rags which men thrash against with their resentment and abhorrence, or the representation of the holy mother in whom they discover their final salvation,”³⁹ then Hamano’s films are a far cry from this. Still, the desire to “know the truth of sex” is in many ways frustrated by the medium of film, as well as the genre/production conventions invented to attempt to get around these frustrations. The sexuality can never be fully on-screen, and so in some ways the claims to “confront sex directly” made frequently by Hamano and in the dialogue by the characters cannot ultimately be realized on the level of film.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, this desire forms a motif in Hamano’s works, including this one.

Pervert Syndrome: Indecent Daydreams opens with an absolutely transparent metaphor for caged sexuality: a woman lies on tatami and as we transition to her fantasy, a woman in a black, harshly lit space writhes suggestively behind cage bars. Here the transparent *visibility* of all fantasy on screen presented to the viewer reveals another generic convention that performs its sleight-of-hand on the question of “subjectivity.” We come to realize quickly what signifies a “real” sexual scene on the level of diegesis and what is a fantasy from the point of view of one of the characters: we often (though not always) see a change of lighting, or the characters’ eyelids droop or a dreamy expression in a close-up of the character’s face, which leads directly into a scene between that character and the person they have just been facing. If fantasy, or the “interiority” of a subject becomes so “easily” visualizable (as if sexual imagination did not contain tactility, smells, as if the subject watched herself from

the outside—we are asked simply to skip over this), then why would we not be able to see on screen directly “the truth of sex”?

Pervert Syndrome opens with this fantasy prologue, followed immediately by a cutaway of a train as a newly engaged couple arrives in Tokyo to meet their go-between, a former teacher of the husband-to-be. The future husband is said to be a former graduate student in Asian Art History, who also wrote about Tolstoy. The film highlights the fantasy/dream theme when we discover that the fiancée, Chitose, has episodes of narcolepsy, and so almost immediately after arriving at the bourgeois respectable home of the *sensei*, “falls asleep” and dreams of her husband-to-be with the *sensei*’s wife. The fiancée’s need for awakening to sexual potential, a common narrative theme for Hamano, is given a psychological explanation: Chitose was indifferent to sex ever since a college boyfriend sexually assaulted her (an incident we are given to see, in her “memory”). In the kind of coincidences that can only happen in porn films, this same man also happens to be her younger sister’s current beau and martial arts partner. When Chitose confesses the content of her dreams to the *sensei*’s wife, the older woman mentors Chitose in a chat in an open park: “Men just don’t get sex. [...] You have to face your sexual desire honestly. Your dreams are teaching you. Listen to what they are telling you. Up to now [...] you closed down your real self (*jibun rashisa*). When women take their real selves back, they become sexualized (*ettchi*; perverted).”

After this dialogue, which could stand in as a representative of any number of such “educational” moments in Hamano’s films,⁴¹ the digital visual effects and sonorized voice return, calling the protagonist’s name, with multiple exposures. The fantasy woman who opened the film (played by the same actress as the protagonist) in the midst of a sexual display looks “back at her” in her dream—looks directly at the camera with an eerie smile. We are thus back to the blue-light scene of “open desire” from the fantasy ideal, the pleasure/power signaled by this smile on the part of the actress. The smile then, and the direct look into the camera, is what is given to viewers as a challenge to the “fourth wall,” the “invisible guest” position, and to the objectification of the female body, or at least the “to-be-looked-at-ness” which is nonetheless a key function (fan service) of most of the shots in the fantasy.⁴²

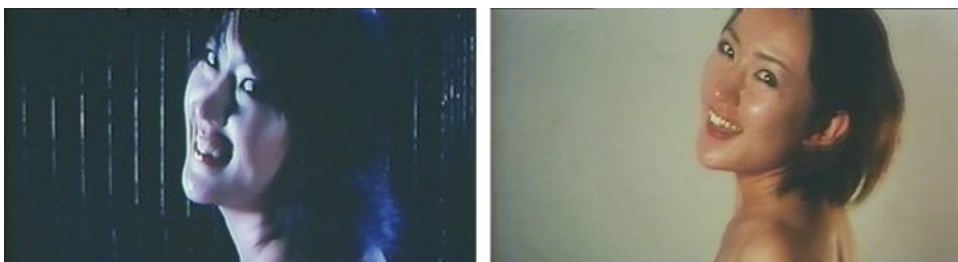


Figure 36: The fantasy woman smiles at the camera (right), and later the character has met her “real self” (right).

Meanwhile, the husband-to-be has a direct sexual discussion with his teacher. “The secret to being a couple is to love each other equally,” says the professor (Nakamitsu Seiji, who most often appears as the figure of the lustful doctor or sexologist in other Hamano works). Here, and in the women’s dialogue, then, is the “liberated” sexuality: a reprise of the 1970s rhetoric of free love for the contemporary age? Chitose goes on to surprise and please first her former rapist (“I want to redo it,” she says, returning to the “scene of the crime”—and this time, the man is a little hapless but happy while she says, “Leave it to me”⁴³). This moment of “infidelity” becomes a segue to her return to her future husband, with whom we have only seen her have “bad” sex: she goes back to the marriage,” the recuperation of the heteronormative couple. She has “faced her desire” (and fear), and this “face to face” is taken on by the direct gaze into the camera, presumably as viewed by *herself*. Now she can return to her marriage to be a healed, rapacious, desiring woman in charge of her own pleasure. Madoka, the sister, meanwhile dumps the evil boyfriend with a short lecture on date rape. In the end, Chitose says to her man: “The real me was closed up. I met [my real self]. I want sex with you like in my dream.” The “match” with the fantasy is thus complete. Indeed, then, in this cinematic world it is imagined to be possible to have sex quite completely visualizable, “as in the dream”—this time with white bed and white light—and the film closes on the “orgasm as smile” of the character having achieved a perfect match (even rotating 180 degrees to do so) with the fantasy, with a variant on the same smile on her face (Fig. 36).

And yet, who is it who is coming face to face with their desire? This may be too obvious to state, but are the male spectators also (or only) being given exactly what they asked, or are they being given to reflect on “their” desire? The status of these works as commodities comes to the fore in two other

works that are more direct challenges to the institution of marriage (a topic, along with date rape, thematized in many of Hamano's films). Working under the name Matoba Chise, Hamano made one of her more acclaimed series that works directly with the time-honored theme of discontented housewives seeking sexual adventure.⁴⁴ Perhaps because of its anti-violent stance(?), *Desiring Wives* (*Yaritai hitozuma-tachi*, 2003)⁴⁵ was invited to the Hiroshima Peace Film Festival in 2009. The housewives series takes on, with evident gusto, the possibilities of internet dating and web-mediated, commodified sexuality. In *Desiring Wives*, the angry (raped) wife⁴⁶ mentored by a girlfriend, withdraws all of her husband's and her joint savings to go off in search of revenge with a better, younger lover found on the internet. Together the wives buy young men: the "angry" wife takes a picture of herself with her cell phone to send to her husband at home. Thus Hamano immediately thematizes the purchase of sex—the industry in which this film fully participates—and specifically the photographic mediation, albeit with an excuse in the plot⁴⁷ of either revenge or education (in some of this film's sequels).

This photo then frames the sex act and becomes the circulated object in the film and the pretext for its message. In a scene that follows soon thereafter, the husband shows the photo to a randomly encountered married woman who gives him a lecture on marriage: "For a couple to be happy, the wife's immorality (*furin*) is a necessity."⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the two wives go to a *sensei* (again played by Nakamitsu, the *sensei* from the previously discussed film) where they can get "sex volunteers" for free, and—while in every doctor's office in pornotopia there are ample couches—he gives them a talk about the legal "exclusive right to sex" under Japanese marriage law. A later discussion focuses on the idea that "love and sex are not a set." The married woman proposes to the other woman's husband: "Let's have feel-good sex." The message of sex outside of love—precisely the "bounded intimacy" of late capitalist sex work, recreational sexuality—frames a mode of sexuality that is not meant to "mean" anything, and here framed in direct contrast to marital law, exclusiveness, and presuppositions about "love."⁴⁹ "Don't say 'buy,'" says one wife. "But it's true!" responds the other.

While the commodity aspect of sexuality is here foregrounded, it also becomes primarily a pretext for the "materiality" of these films: the watching of convulsive female bodies in simulated (and solitary) orgasms, full frontal nudity, while bodies supposed to be maximally touching try to interfere min-



Figure 37: The two wives convulse in the same frame, with melded voices, their eyes remain closed, faces mostly averted, as if they could not look at one another.

imally with the perceptual availability of their acts to the camera. It is also a homosocial female world (a “buddy film”?) where the most trusting and least formally/economically circumscribed relationship is found in the discussions between the women—and any implication of sexual interest in each other is studiously avoided. Even when the two women are involved in a (signature) four-person scene, and they do touch one another, there is a gingeriness there, a sort of *de rigueur* quality of the one scene of same-sex physical intimacy as primarily one more form of service to the implicit audience. (Of course, the men never touch.) Most striking is the moment when, at the end of the film, the two wives on the doctor’s giant couch take on their supposed “last” round with the doctor himself and the “volunteer,” and though they convulse within the same frame, with melded voices, their eyes remain closed, faces mostly averted, as if they could not look at one another (Fig. 37).⁵⁰ Perhaps the only striking exception to this separation is when the more experienced AV actress, Kagami Reiko, grabs the hand of the other actress in a very matter of fact way (“materialistically” as it were) and sticks it matter of factly on her own body. At the end, again we see the “smile.”⁵¹ At the close, then, of this strange interlude—in some ways the whole film, if not the whole genre, has been the sexual interlude missing from the rest of mainstream cinema—the barrier of marriage is broken, and the wife leaves the husband, departing, with a determined expression, on her own.

In several other films, the issue of commodification of sex, censorship, and sexual mediation by visual technology are highlighted. In the most recent *Fools for Lust: Initiation in the Secret Room* (*Shikajo chijo: misshitsu no tebodoki*, 2010), a woman pays a young man to read from a censored book, while another couple searches for this same woman to retrieve the money she allegedly extorted from them. As the young man reads, she is excited by his reading of precisely the most censored bits of the text, oddly framed with their censorship marks left explicit: the XX and OO that cover the incriminating language, she tells him to read out as “*peke peke*” (cross cross) and “*maru maru*” (circle circle) as they appear in the surface of the text (rather than filling in the likely content).⁵² In Hamano’s Pinks, the place of genre censorship/self-censorship is everywhere apparent in what is not shown, and yet as this scene implies, it can be precisely the (few) prohibitions that can be framed as a source or at least as a “scene” of erotic desire.

Within the nurse-fetish category, which comprises a sizable series, *Pantiless under the White Robe: Wet Below* (*Nopan bakui: nureta kafukubu*, 2000) depicts female nurses striking out from the hospital to start their own business, and while at first horrified by their sexualization by their patients, in the end they embrace the dream of providing “sexual healing” and by becoming nursing/sex workers, seize the control of their labor, as their closing motto says: “We are not white angels. We are fallen angels, so we can live/survive tomorrow.” (A shot of the three women naked gives way to a shot of them in the same pose in their nurse’s uniforms.) Here, too, a good amount of photographing of their sexual acts is part of this “survival” scenario—to keep the hospital director from foiling their plans. Sex in this film can be healing for the patients; it is also often patently instrumental. Paradoxically, the otaku *hikikomori* (shut-in) indoors in this film plays the role of the sexual innocent, whose surprise at the nurse’s willingness to cater to his desire—in return for the promise that he will go outside and meet “real” women—is framed in a self-reflexively humorous moment (Fig. 38). When the otaku-youth, played by the truly funny Yanagi Hidenori, finally goes outside, it is the nurse who is his “real woman,” and in a rare moment, the camera follows the movement of sex on a swing, looking into the sun and down to the ground, arguably one of the most playful (and non-“thrusting”) depictions of sexual rhythms in Hamano’s work discussed here. (The relation between this nurse and the otaku is also one of the most romantic and in some sense



Figure 38: The otaku between real and virtual objects of desire.

“soft-core,” even while the commodity of sexual healing remains explicitly in play.)

Yet one of the best known and most explicit thematizations of sex as/and work takes place in *Desiring Wives II: Take me to Heaven Technique* (*Yaritai hitozuma-tachi 2: Shoten tekunikku*, 2003, sequel from the same year as *Desiring Wives* discussed above). The film begins with a TV broadcast of a woman writer attacking the economic and sexual situation of full-time housewives. She claims that housewives are talentless, like house pets, and serve in a form of unpaid prostitution (“In fact, to say so is an insult to sex workers,” she says, “because the sex is not as good.”). An angry wife who hears her attack stabs her steak in anger and vows revenge.

On one level simply a “jealous women” narrative, this work highlights the movement of capitalist culture, the “capitalism” of desire itself. That is, sex is no longer a “pure” realm of “good feeling,” if it ever was, but is directly linked to the power of sale. (“You say it will be a bestseller?” asks the writer of the book containing this argument against housewives, immediately sexually aroused by the editor.) When the writer attacks specifically the sex performed by housewives as “weak,” the wives ask the telling question: “And what kind of sex is she having?” If the office is the space for “buying” success with sex, the housewife of a worker relocated away from his family also makes sure to record her trysts with the same writer’s boyfriend on her video

camera. “How’s my meal?” “Delicious.” Her feminist discourse can take place with the writer’s boyfriend as witness: “This body belongs to no one else.” The steak-stabbing housewife (again Kagami Reiko) offers to write a book, “The Housewife’s Revenge.” Yet in the end, the fighting women reconcile—“authenticity” between the women prevails as they *both* fail to achieve material success and the two women meet face to face in this (homosocial) world where the “truth” comes out between women. “We fought hard, didn’t we?” “My book failed, but it’s for the best. I was tired of that life.” In the end, the message of sex without commitment prevails: the wife with the absent husband refuses the cute boyfriend’s offer of marriage, preferring perpetual adultery; the writer winds up with one of the other husbands, doing her nails and drinking while he prepares dinner in a maid apron; and at last, the steak-stabbing Kagami Reiko, having left her housewife-role, toasts herself (naked) in the mirror in her new, independent apartment.

While attacking the sexual mores of marriage, catering to the desires of male viewers, invoking the “indecent” subjects that were once the key subject matter of censorship, and playing on the edges of allowable sexual representation in the frame of a feminist-inflected discovery and exploration of female sexuality, Hamano’s films—seeming utterly simple on the surface, utterly formulaic—leave us with what at first appears to be a mess of contradictions. They seem to be neither only one thing nor only the other, but to trace the line around consensual sexual labor in feminist debates, and the issue of sexual representation in cinema can only partially account for these films’ place in Pink Film and in cinematic representations of sexuality more broadly.

Yet observing Hamano on location in June 2010, shooting *Sexual Harassment by a Woman Boss: Torment of Pleasure by Panty Stocking* (*Sekubara onna joshi: pansuto seikan seme*, 2010, OP Eiga, see accompanying description), I find that these apparent contradictions no longer *feel* like contradictions on the set of Hamano Sachi’s films. If anything, as sociologists argue, sexuality and intimate life are so deeply bound up in the regimes of media consumption and commodification, visual desire so thoroughly imbricated by now in technological media practices, that it is no longer a matter of separate or separable spheres. The language of authenticity has a place but cannot shake the world of the commodity and its impacts. On Hamano’s set, there is a comfortable collaboration between director and screenwriters, a respectful deference to

the expertise of cameraman and assistant director, a friendly bantering repartee among the crew and between the actors. There is a sense of “relaxed interest,” even commitment: young women and men are getting their first chance to try a part of acting or filmmaking they have never done before. Amidst the long and grueling hours of the three-day shoot, something like a sense of community develops. The commodification of sexuality and the feminist empowerment agenda are not experienced as a contradiction at all, and that in itself marks a shift, both in perceptions of sexuality and in the structures and modes of feminist thought.

Thus, although this essay opened with a sense that the feminist agenda and the commodified sexuality would work in opposing directions, or in Hamano’s terms constitute a “misunderstanding,” in the end the apparent paradox turns out, rather, to be a matter of a different sort: in fact, a paradigmatic manifestation and demonstration of the blurred boundaries of the spheres of commodified sexuality and “authentic” embodied subjectivity under late capitalism—that is, showing the ways that the “authentic,” including the intimate realm of so-called “female desire” (and solidarity) cannot be fully and cleanly separated from the structuring role of specularized commodification of sexuality at this moment any more than it could in the high-growth era when Hamano began her work with Pinks. This interconnection between the two realms is emblemized visually by the mediation of sexuality through technology (video, cell phones, and later the web). Hamano’s Pink Film, eschewing both the mythologization of sex and the acting out of revolution through violence on the female body, is a good place to see this process highlighted openly and explicitly.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s when Hamano began to work, Pinks were seen to partake in an “oppositional” socio-political stance, as will be discussed in many essays in this volume; so on the one hand, it is not surprising and quite congruent that the form of “oppositional” discourse that is feminism would be considered appropriate for incorporation into the genre of the Pinks. The complex imbrication of discourses of “authenticity” and commercialism were in fact being worked through in many films in the 1960s-1970s, even those most in the mainstream, from Toho musicals to Roman Porno, and in that sense Hamano’s films represent merely one (marginal) part of a much broader process. The legacies of the incorporation of “authentic” or “embodied” emotion (be it around sexuality, intimacy, or oth-

er interiorized “feeling”) into the commodity structure continue to be worked out over the following decades in Hamano’s work.

Still, one might speculate that Hamano’s program pictures on margins of mainstream cinema anticipated this shift long before it became more clearly evident in the broader cultural landscape of today. Her “materialist” approach interestingly foregrounded a process that was going on across a range of genres that dealt in sexuality and subjectivity. Moreover, by finding a way to make films at all in a social context and time where women were almost never given that opportunity, from the emergent period of the genre of Pink Film, and then founding her own production company and sustaining it to the present, Hamano stands today as a lone female veteran in the terrain of Pinks at a moment when the key place of this genre within Japanese cinema is just beginning to receive scholarly attention.⁵³ It may turn out, as Kristeva claimed of *écriture féminine*, that the biological sex of the filmmaker does not necessarily condition the most revolutionary depictions of sexuality. Still, as a practitioner of an undeniable boldness and independence, and as the proponent of a (slightly off-kilter, “queer materialist,”) assertive stance, Hamano deserves our attention for her pioneering place within the world of Pinks, and her prescient exploration of the broader visual regime of sexual subjectivity in commodity culture.⁵⁴

On the Set with Hamano Sachi

June 20, 2010

I arrive in Harajuku Station and Hamano’s longtime collaborator and screenwriter Yamazaki Kuninori picks me up at the station. Chatting about the shooting schedule and Japanese feminist writers he has read like Ueno Chişuko, we wind our way past fashion crowds with red-dyed vertical anime hair through to the smaller streets and alleyways of offices, sound recording studios, and chic apartments in the inner recesses of Harajuku north. When we arrive, there is a white mini-van parked outside a white tile building. The group is in the middle of shooting; I am told to wait outside. I sit on a beat-up old couch next to a handsome, thin young actor, maybe in his thirties, and I introduce myself. I am immediately aware of the “aura” of this actor, who turns out to be Hirakawa Naohiro, who appears frequently in Hamano’s films. Without having tracked this carefully, I know

I have seen him a number of times onscreen in preparation for this project. The strangeness of the “liveness” of Hirakawa, a face I have only ever seen on my computer screen, now on this ratty couch in the mid-afternoon light strikes me, and suddenly I feel a little flustered, like a bit of a fan. When I explain what I am doing here, researching Hamano, and give him my card, Hirakawa gives me a sideward look and says, “You do know what kind of film this is?”

Hirakawa is proud of his work in Ikejima Yutaka’s The Japanese Wife Next Door (Inran naru ichizoku, 2005-6), whose recent DVD release in the U.S. was highly successful—at some point in the shooting the crew quips that it was selling even better than Miyazaki’s Ponyo (2008), selling #1 to Ponyo’s #2. A crew member joked that Hamano should be called “Mrs. Pink” to Ike-san’s moniker [eponym?] of “Mr. Pink.” Hirakawa seems hesitant about something—maybe about my being here. In contrast to what Hamano had written in her essay collection, When a Woman Makes a Film, it seems not the women but rather he who, while maintaining his professional demeanor, seems (and later tells me he is) embarrassed to have me on the set. Hamano had written that until she was established as a director, it was the women who objected to having her gaze on them during shooting—that the embarrassment centered on her being a woman, on being watched by another woman. By contrast, actress Asai spoke to me openly of how completely proud she was to have this chance to do real acting and have concrete direction for her acting in this, her first starring role in a Pink production after prior roles in AVs (Adult Video). “There, they treat you like a princess. And also there are nothing but sex (ettchi) scenes, where they are just interested in your onna no buki. Here, I learn a lot.”

For Asai, having a chance to star in a Hamano film is a special chance, and especially to do “drama” scenes in addition to the sex scenes and be coached by such an experienced director as Hamano and work with an experienced actor like Hirakawa. [Asai shows me the shooting schedule, which in addition to indicating costume choice, marks what times they can expect to do an explicit sex scene by a filled in (black) as opposed to open (white) circle.] Speaking with Asai, I get a sense of the mentorship Hamano offers to young women in the business; the director seems to have a more teasing, and slightly more tense power relation with Hirakawa. Later I learn that the woman who is acting as costume person and second assistant director, Kanazawa Rie, is in fact the screenwriter of this film: a young, solid woman in jeans, a t-shirt, and a baseball cap in her late 20s or early 30s for whom this is her first produced screenplay. There, too, I sense Hamano’s intervention on the level of production practices, her efforts to mentor younger women into the business.

PINK FEMINISM?

The plot of the film involves a woman boss getting revenge on male employees for her own experiences of sexual harassment on the corporate ladder—getting revenge by harassing male subordinates. There is a teasing dynamic to the reversal of gender roles mirroring that taking place on the set itself. There is a lightness to the atmosphere: when Hira-kawa worries about which tie he should wear, someone remarks, “You are not Hatoya-ma.” But the most striking element on the set is the palpable presence of the large 35mm camera so strongly following the male point of view on the woman’s body. At one point, this fact is even directly stated by Hamano to the cameraman, Oyamada Masaharu: first he films Hira-kawa looking up at Asai, and then he moves the camera to a low angle and pans up Asai’s scantily clothed body. “You are Hira-kawa’s eyes,” she says. Showing the woman’s body was the clear selling point: the camera spent a lot more time, especially during the sex scenes, pointing at Asai.

Hamano, who welcomes me warmly and makes sure I am given a crate to sit on, runs the show in a friendly and matter of fact way. The one-room office that serves as a set is cramped with people: six male crew members, the director Hamano, the lead actress, and now me. We shift and step over lighting cords from scene to scene to accommodate the angle of shooting and to stay out of the way, and Kanazawa-san mostly stays outside in the van. Each shot is rehearsed briefly with some suggestions from Hamano—about how Asai walks in, about blocking, about costume and makeup—then moves to “Hon-tesuto” (final test, practiced as it will be done but without the camera rolling) and then Hamano announces, “Hai, honban” (the real thing). Honban is also a term used in other contexts in the business to indicate “real” as opposed to simulated sex. In the final practice (hon-tesuto) Hira-kawa mimes licking the actress’s stockings and boots; in hon-ban, he really licks. Quite a bit of direction is given to the actors for the dialogue/drama scenes; for the sex scenes, besides attention to composition—what is shown and not shown—and the position of the camera, the actors are left much more to their own devices. The daytime shots are “lighter,” with more dialogue and drama; at night the most explicit scenes are filmed, with the office door ajar and the actors warned to keep their voices down so as not to attract suspicion. The lighting crew uses a large spot shining through the translucent front window of the ground-level office that is serving as the location. Continuity is key: Hamano attends to the angle of a garter like Ozu moving bottles on a table in the frame; between scenes the office clock is moved to show the passage of time. In the explicit scenes, mid-paroxysm, Hamano shouts “mama” (hold it) and the actors freeze in position while the camera switches angles or Oyamada changes the lens.

The structuring condition of Pinks—the fact of simulation that is still trying for verisimilitude, the fact of censorship—comes to the fore most intensely during the sex



Figure 39: On the set with Hamano Sachi (second from left).

scenes. The art of Pink is the art of screening sex in general, but in a completely overt way: it is the art, that is, of showing and also masking, screening out. Since Pinks such as the one Hamano was shooting that day give lots of close-ups but cannot show penetration, there is a lot of technical finessing involved: assistant director Kato Yoshihito is in charge of mixing up the fake sperm to the right consistency, and cutting out surgical tape, skin-colored (kakushi), to cover the crack in the woman's body and make her both all about visibility and selectively invisible (a Barbie doll). Psychoanalytic theory would have a lot to say about the spectacle of a woman with her crack covered over by skin-colored tape, the almost too literal masking of the scene of "lack" posited by Freud. (In fact, it is hard not to see this production in general as a staging of scenes of castration and its reversal, an all too literal matching of phallic power with sexuality.) To make up for the absence of penetration there is an abundance of sperm, passed from one mouth to the other, and an abundant focus on the woman's chest, as well as lace, shoes, lingerie (classic fetish objects/substitutions). Sometimes the lighting assistant holds a cardboard stick in the air to create shadow in the area of the tape so that its edges will be obscured in the shot. The key issue is

visibility: the cameraman tells Hamano what is and is not in the shot, if something is seen that is not allowed to be or vice-versa. "Move your arm there because it blocks your chest."

Asai looks very comfortable, very at home in her body and confident of the sex scenes in a way that is less apparent during the "drama" segments: this part is her home turf. Showing bodies does not seem to be a big deal here. That said, there are residual recognitions of modesty: Hamano gives a towel or blanket to cover the actors during any lengthier pauses to adjust the camera during the shooting, and she says "excuse me" when she removes them. During most extended sex scenes, there is no "test"—just "honban." Hamano directs from the sidelines "You are about to come..." "Now you come." ("Hai, ikiso...Hai, itta.") The sound will be dubbed in afterwards.

Thanks to simulation, in many respects Pinks are kinder to male actors than regular porn: in the clothed scenes, a dildo (uso-chin) is used and the men are never required to "perform" or be judged for size or hardness. The gaze of Pinks in that sense is forgiving for the men—and in any case, their own gaze mainly serves as a substitute for a viewer's as the camera focuses relentlessly on the woman's body. There is lots of attention to whether the uso-chin has moved from one shot to the next—for example, when Asai steps on it with her high heel in a gesture of dominance, asking Hirakawa several times between tests if he is (really) O.K. (Fig. 39). A certain politeness remains, a certain on-set courtesy. Asai is eager to star opposite the well-known Hirakawa, but in the explicit scenes, he lies on the couch below as she rises up into the spotlight.

Partway through, curry gyudon (rice and beef) is delivered for the whole crew, and I think to go out for something but they have counted me in and bought me one, too. I am taking notes and watching, as much a fly on the wall as I can be, and every once in awhile someone asks me what I am writing. I am staring to feel the "air" of this community, a certain odd affection that I feel provisionally a part of among the crew and longtime collaborators: Yamazaki Kuninori stays until five, snapping stills of the set and actors on occasion in parallel with the camera; Oyamada has been working with Hamano many years too, and the crew defers to his judgements as an old hand. The lighting assistants are film production students cutting their chops on this kind of project, racking up experience here but they are blatantly enamored with Hollywood. When they hear I am from California they are ready for me to hook them up with my local contacts. They are enthralled with Michael Mann and the manga writer Ishii Takashi. After dinner, it's back to work until about 11 pm (I arrived at 3 o'clock, but they have been working since early morning). I wonder briefly if they are going to go out drinking afterward like most other collaborative work in Japan I have seen, to celebrate the feeling of camaraderie they have built, but it doesn't look like it. They are going home—the shoot starts up early and runs all day the

*next day. It is a provisional, temporary community, but a community nonetheless: the kind of intimacies and connections that are part of a mobile and provisional sector of the labor economy, one thematized in the film itself with a temp labor agency at its center, which plays on (or serves as symbol for) the mobilities of sexuality, intimacy, and community itself in the broader social sphere. Nonetheless, even among “freeters,” the old narratives are here (both in the story and on the set itself): in the story, the corporate rise to managerial status or ‘elite track’; on the set, the desire to rise, in the film and TV world (or other media), the upward rise, the rise from a ground of this work to (now in *Pinks* possible) more mainstream stardom; the aspiring youth and the kindly nurturing mentor figure (established institution) that is Hamano Sachi as a veteran director today. Hamano is clearly an institution in herself, yet she works in the provisional space of *Pinks*, creating a kind of space of institutionalized provisionality.*

[Looking in the mirror that night, my postpartum body does not compute as part of the gazed-on world that Asai inhabits.]

*Hamano does indeed seem to have done something unusual in this world of *Pinks*, and done it before many others, in her own unique way. She is one of the few non-actresses to direct; most of the other women directors in Pink Film today stared out as actresses. Though Hirakawa had said to me, “You know, this is a porno,” by the end porn felt like one technicality among many, one piece of cinematic craft among many, like another special body-effect (blood in horror, makeup in monster films), with its masks and its fluids, its lenses and light reflection boards. I learned something about cinema from being there, and in that sense experienced what *Pinks* have been for so many directors and techies since the 1960s in Japan: a training ground in cinema, perhaps for the sake of something that follows, but perhaps oddly, also for its own sake.*

*Pinks remind me of one integral part of what cinema has always been about: the depiction of bodies and sexuality not as marginal but as an intensely palpable substrate of all cinematic work. If *Pinks* take it to a more explicit (trashy) level, or it takes a more central place there, the commerce in embodied visualization (and desiring gazes) nonetheless form a central part of what cinema is. When sex becomes the center, as here, some other aspects of the story and complex characterization and writing fall away—this is low budget, fast, and serial, after all. And it has the phantasmagoric quality of an older tech: the Arriflex 35mm camera shooting film in the digital era for theatrical and then eventual video release resists, in its own way, the continual supercessions of technological progress (though the films can also now be downloaded online). The *Pinks* are fast, generated in an infinitely extendable series, and meant to be consumed as such. Yet seriality, sexuality, and the commerce in the viewing of bodies is a fundamental part of all visual media: while*

Pinks like Hamano's push this aspect to the fore at a more extreme level, they serve to remind us that these elements form key conditions both for cinematic production and for the mediated construction of sexual visibility more broadly, in ways that have extended from the 1960s to the present.

NOTES

¹ Critical material about Hamano's Pink Film work is scarce, but in 2005 she released a book, *Onna ga eiga o tsukuru toki*, which gives important perspectives on her career and recent work. Her website also makes this claim that her company, Tantan-sha, has "produced more than 300 films taking the theme of depicting 'sexuality' from the woman's point of view" (*'sei' o josei-gawa kara no shiten de egaku koto o teema ni*). From "Hamano Sachi: Purofōjiru," <http://www.h3.dion.ne.jp/~tantan-s/>. The question of how they "take the theme" of depicting sexuality from the woman's point of view (perhaps not exactly the same as "depicting sexuality from the woman's point of view") is one that will be considered further below. The fact that "*sei*" (sex, sexuality) is in quotation marks here also stands out—what exactly it is that is being depicted from a woman's point of view comes into question. The quotation marks, as often used in scholarship, could also point to the clear awareness of the discursive construction of the term. Many thanks for help with this project are due to Hamano Sachi and her distributors Sakurai, Fukuhara Akira, and Inayama Teiji, as well as to Maiko Morimoto and Paul Roquet for research assistance and to Markus Nornes for suggesting the idea for this piece.

² The translations of these titles pose some problems. The original title here was "17-year old Lewd Tribe" (*17-sai sukimono-zōku*) but the word "*sukimono*" (lecher, "lover of love") ran up against the Eirin censorship codes and so was replaced with this more ambiguous term. The date of Hamano's first officially directed film is listed variously as 1970 (in *Kinema junpo's Illustrated Who's Who of Japanese Cinema Directors* bio, as well as implicitly in her *Onna ga eiga o tsukuru toki*, 33-34; 1971 on her website profile, and 1972 in the Japanese Movie Database which takes its information from the catalogues of *Kinema junpo* magazine. This discrepancy is also noted in Jasper Sharp, *Behind the Pink Curtain*, 307, n404. Before this film, she served as a "pinch hitter" director when the director for the film "Woman's Body Delicacy" (*Nyotai chinmi*) ran away, so this could perhaps be considered her debut film, though she was originally uncredited. But she worked as screenwriter for *17-year old Love Tribe*, and so she usually considers this her true "debut."

³ Hamano writes, “Pink Films are made on a subcontract from a distribution company, and the director does not hold the copyright. In other words, the director undertakes/is contracted [for work on] the production, and after the goods are delivered that is the end: that is the kind of contract the Pink Films are made under. In particular for my debut works, the distribution and production companies no longer exist, and furthermore, Pink Films were made as program pictures, so when the works got old their negatives were junked [thrown out/*janku sareru*].” Personal communication, 1/4/10.

⁴ Elizabeth Bernstein describes this term as somewhat problematic shorthand for the “views of feminists who sought to emphasize the potential for pleasure as well as danger in patriarchal heterosexual relations.” See Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex*, 205n43 and for a fuller articulation, Carole Vance, ed. *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*.

⁵ Hamano’s very early work no longer exists, for reasons discussed here. However, it should be emphasized that the works treated in this essay are Pink Films, shot on film and projected in theaters, and not AV (adult videos), although some of Hamano’s works have also been transferred and made available for download in various formats.

⁶ It would be interesting to contrast this version of “junk” with the junk art being produced as a reflection on the material waste of the high-growth period at around the same time, in which this “junk” material is used as the raw materials for sculpture and visual work. See Reiko Tomii, “After ‘The Descent to the Everyday’: Japanese Collectivism from Hi Red Center to The Play, 1964-1973,” 45-76.

One also might think of the emblematic moment in Oshima Nagisa’s *The Man Who Left His Will on Film* (*Tokyo senso sengo hiva*, 1970) in which the key film in question may or may not have been made out of the “junked” bits and scraps from the documentary collective’s more content-focused works.

⁷ Nonetheless it is important to note the work of early feminist writers from the late 19th century to the interwar period, including changing definitions of sexuality, as elaborated for example in the work of Miriam Silverberg, Janine Beichman, and others, which were effective in making many changes and prepared the way for some of these later transformations.

⁸ Saito Ayako, “The Melodramatic Body as a Discursive Critique of Patriarchy in Masumura Yasuzo’s Films of the 1960s,” Society for Cinema and Media Studies, Los Angeles, March 20, 2010.

⁹ See Laura Mulvey’s 1973 “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” 6.

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- ¹⁰ For extensive discussion on the problems of the term “New Wave” (Shochiku Nouvelle Vague) and discussion of the films in question, in some cases in terms of gender and sexuality, see, for example, David Desser, *Eros Plus Massacre: an Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema*; Maureen Turim, *The Films of Oshima Nagisa: Images of a Japanese Iconoclast*, among many others.
- ¹¹ “A large part of my generation did see making love as part of a political act against war. [...] But what was a woman’s place in this loving alternative to war? [...] What *was* a politically correct form of making love for a woman?” Interestingly, Williams talks about the critical background of these questions in terms of writers who were also very prominently read in Japan at this time, especially Marcuse: “My draft-resisting friends and I were echoing the words of Frankfurt School theorists like Herbert Marcuse and Norman O Brown who argued against the Freudian premise that sexual desire was in permanent need of sublimation if human culture and society were to persevere. Marcuse’s *Eros and Civilization*, first published in 1955, had challenged Sigmund Freud’s premise that sexual desire was permanently at odds with human society. Marcuse envisioned a liberation that would restore the ‘right of sensuousness,’ transform toil into unproductive play, and not simply release libido but utterly transform it.” Williams, *Screening Sex*, 157–8. Thus reframing labor (and resisting “instrumental reason”) are key to understanding what the transformations of sexuality and the “liberation of sexual desire” would mean for a feminist politics of this period, and these ideas certainly underlie the kinds of reflections on labor and sexuality in Hamano’s films as well. I touch on Marcuse’s place in 1960s thought in my *Experimental Arts in Postwar Japan: Moments of Encounter, Engagement, and Imagined Return* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011).

¹² These questions in Williams' analysis are emblemized by Jane Fonda's performances of orgasm in *Barbarella: Queen of the Galaxy* (1968) along with her public role as "Hanoi Jane" (1972). Williams, *Screening Sex*, 164–65. Another key impulse for my writing this piece, and hence learning something about Pink Film, was the sense that a key intertext for Oshima's *In the Realm of the Senses* (*Ai no koriida*, 1976), at least for the Japanese context, was not primarily *shunga*, even by way of a contrast, but rather the extensive genre of Pink Film. In the context of Pink Film, Oshima's work becomes a form of hardcore nonetheless aligned with Pink's more censored forms, and thus can be seen as one contribution to a much more longstanding (over ten year) tradition, as the participation of Pink filmmakers Adachi Masao and Wakamatsu Koji in production of Oshima's film also indicates. The relation between the Pinks and this Oshima film, in terms of the cinematic structures deployed there and how they may have been unique within the Western pornographic context but far less so in the Japanese pornographic context, still bear further investigation.

¹³ Hamano, *Onna ga eiga o tsukuru toki*, 33-34.

¹⁴ I put this term in scare quotes because it is implicit, if not explicit, in her argument; and also, because it raises a lot of theoretical questions and problems.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁷ A particularly egregious confirming example is the DVD release of Wakamatsu's *Ecstasy of the Angels* with the last two reels reversed: as if it almost does not matter in what order one sees the reels. This error makes the film seem even more iconoclastically experimental and erratic than it really is.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁹ At the same time one could perform a more "distant" reading in the frame of documentary practices at the time—except, perhaps, for the editing's "deception." Why would one be more uncomfortable with deception in a simulated sex scene that includes "real" touch than with a "real" sex scene (like Hara's)?

²⁰ Mary Ann Doane's and also B. Ruby Rich's readings about the dialectical relationship of female viewers and media makers to cinema could be of use here.

²¹ Hamano, *Onna ga eiga o tsukuru toki*, 40-41, my emphasis.

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- ²² Hamano writes: “The female sex depicted by male directors only showed an ‘illusory woman’ (*genso no onna*). The female flesh that they had only taken as if it had (hidden) significance (*imi-arige ni*, saturated with meaning) I faced directly, in extreme close up, and filmed it materialistically (*sokubutsu-teki ni*). It was a statement of challenge to the male directors who, without knowing female sexuality, liked to mystify it. [...] I pierced the fact that the Pink Films made by male directors are inconclusive as commodities.” (*Onna*, 40). There is something really intriguing about this statement: by reaching to the degree zero of materialistic depiction of female flesh, by “purifying” the commodity as commodity, one might say—if the male directors’ mystifications of female sexuality are in some way inconclusive or incomplete as “commodities,” her “materialistic” (and practical, businesslike) approach is direct, aware of itself as commodity, and in some ways thus implicitly demystifying or challenging the broader corpus of Pink Film and the workings of commodity culture itself.
- ²³ See Williams, *Hard Core*, 36 and *passim*.
- ²⁴ However, the hard core convention of showing the “reverse” of the money shot (white liquid sprayed on the woman’s body or face) persists as a frequent convention. Also, liquid dribbling from the woman’s mouth, often into the man’s mouth, is another “stand-in” for the money shot.
- ²⁵ This description comes from Pauline Kael’s review of Bertolucci’s *Last Tango in Paris*, cited in Williams, *Screening Sex*, 113.
- ²⁶ Still, there are moments that partially visually displace this “centeredness”: the nurse who sexually “heals” a patient with a broken leg, his giant cast at the center of the frame, with a poster of Audrey Hepburn innocently gazing out from the back wall (in *Pantiless under the White Robe: Wet Below* [*Nopan bakui: nureta kafukubu*, 2000]); or the laughing and frenzied joy of Yanagi Hidenori when he gets to bury his face in the backside of a nurse (in *Pink Salon Hospital 4: Pantiless Nurses* [*Pinsaro byoin 4: nopan kango*, 2001] one sequel to the prize-nominated *Whore Hospital* [*Pinsaro byoin: nopan bakui*], 1997).
- ²⁷ Distributor Fukuhara Akira of Shin-Toho Eiga writes, “Hamano is a director who brings together two sides: on the one hand, she challenges the barriers of gender and effects a provocation on the levels of ideology and sensibility; and on the other, she has her craftsperson-like capabilities as an entertainer.” Personal communication, 3/23/10.

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- ²⁸ Here one might cite Arlie Hochschild's work on the commodification of emotion under late industrial capitalism as a significant theoretical reading of the ways notions of "authenticity" (including of sexuality) are increasingly shaped by and framed in the structures of commodities (her term "emotion work" is a key one here), and hence how—as perhaps Hamano's work also shows—this is not a true contradiction but rather a symptomatic manifestation of the blurring of boundaries between these two realms. Hamano's film *Lend Couples: Exchange Sex* (*Dosukebe fufu: kokan sekkesu*, 2000) illustrates the entrance of internet sex work practices into the "private" sexual lives of two couples, along these lines.
- ²⁹ See Azuma Hiroki, *Dobutsu-ka suru posutomodan*, translated as *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals*.
- ³⁰ Fredric Jameson uses this term: "This is not to say that the cultural products of the post-modern era are utterly devoid of feeling, but rather that such feelings—which it may be better and more accurate to call 'intensities'—are now free-floating and impersonal." *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 64.
- ³¹ "Lily Festival" (*Yurisa*), about aging women's sexual desire, is according to Hamano a response to the fact that, because of these older male audiences, in Pink Film "the woman always has to be young and pretty, preferably with big breasts. If an actress over forty is cast, the film belongs to the special category of "ripe woman genre" (*jukujo-mono*) for "adventurous tastes" (*getemono*)." See Hamano, *Onna*, 83-84. *Lily Festival* cast Yoshiyuki Kazuko, the actress who starred in Oshima's *In the Realm of the Senses* (*Ai no korida*, 1976), who complained that all the parts she was offered were minor parts without proper names. "I am happy to play the part in your film of an older person who lives her life as a woman with a proper name." (92)
- ³² This is evidenced not only by the evident difficulty both the director herself and distributor Fukuhara Teiji expressed in helping to narrow down the field to a smaller number of 'representative' films, but also in the ways amateur reviewers describe the films on their fan blogs: as part of the "Hamano-style" or "Hamano-type" of film (*Hamano-ryu*). (In a sense, by this term they attest to the fact that she has created her own serialized "genre", which might return us to the question of receiving her as an "auteur", except that again, there is such a strong de-emphasis on individual works; and the fan blogs also do not represent the mainstream of theatrical viewership, but rather the new Pink "mania"-types that emerged in recent years. One can see this also in how very strongly the "auteur" rhetoric comes in, returns on all fronts in force, with the discussions of her non-Pink Films.

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- ³³ For Azuma's description of this "double-layer" structure of reception see *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals*, 53.
- ³⁴ Many of Wakamatsu's films appropriate elements of the mass media and reflect on violence and spectacle as political context; the role of the sexual spectacle can be critical, parodic, and/or simply formulaic. In Wakamatsu's *Ecstasy of the Angels* (*Tenshi no kokotsu*, 1972), for example, the characters seem almost to look at their watches and perform routine mechanical sex by the clock, hardly interrupting their conversation about the revolution.
- ³⁵ See, for example, the reviews of Hamano's recent *Fools for Lust: Initiation in the Secret Room* (*Shikijo chijo: misshitsu no tebodoki*) released on 3/19/10. One ephemeral blogger reports at <http://deportees.blog-so-net.ne.jp/2010-03-28>, retrieved on 4/12/10.
- ³⁶ Jasper Sharp, *Behind the Pink Curtain: The Complete History of Japanese Sex Cinema*, 297-298.
- ³⁷ The most literal sense would be showing the women on top, sexually dominant over hapless men, which Hamano certainly does, and having a woman behind the camera.
- ³⁸ There is a striking scene in *Lewd Couples: Exchange Sex* (*Dosukebe fufu: kokan sekksu*, 2000) in which the wife performing with her husband before the camera, with the intent of showing the video to the other couple, asks her husband: "Should I open my legs this much? Like this?" in an explicit reflection on the camera's key place in this act. She considers how much visibility is the right amount to retain both viewer's access and the "sense of authenticity" of the act.
- ³⁹ Hamano, *Onna ga Eiga o Tsukuru Toki*, 32.
- ⁴⁰ One of the things confronted most directly here, then, rather than "sex" itself, is the relationship of cinema with censorship law, and Pink Film's oppositional stance toward mainstream cinema and toward censorship plays a key role.
- ⁴¹ In these moments, Hamano's works stand in alignment with the self-help or *iyashi-kei* discourses of the 1990s-2000s, any number of self-healing modes and cultural forms that proliferated during this time. It is also perhaps worth remembering the long-standing relationship between the genres of pornography and sexual education in Japan as well as in the U.S.
- ⁴² The terms "invisible guest" and "to-be-looked-at-ness" are key terms from Mulvey's famous essay.
- ⁴³ One cannot miss the apologia/male side of this fantasy: that the woman he raped will come back and "want it" this time.

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- ⁴⁴ See Anne McKnight's article, "The Wages of Affluence: The High-Rise Housewife in Japanese Sex Films," for further reflections on how this plays out in Roman Porno.
- ⁴⁵ Sharp takes this up under the title *Greedy Housewives*. See Sharp, *Behind the Pink Curtain*, 297-298. Other films take up the issue of the working woman vs. the full time housewife; see discussion below.
- ⁴⁶ She is "raped" by a husband who claims "your body is mine!" in an hyper-old-style masculinist mode.
- ⁴⁷ Though it is a photograph of a kiss, almost every kiss in these films is open-mouthed with maximum visibility of tongues—there is little or no "romance" here.
- ⁴⁸ As noted in Kirsten Cather's piece for this volume, the theme of adultery itself was one of the subject matters explicitly censored by Eirin in both its initial and revised (1959) forms.
- ⁴⁹ The relationship of such "bounded intimacy" in sex work to the absence of "hidden meanings" in the sexuality described by Hamano bears further investigation. For a discussion of the concept of bounded intimacy/bounded authenticity and its relationship to late capitalist social structures, see Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours*, 6 and *passim*.
- ⁵⁰ The men, who are hardly shown, have their eyes wide open. When the women do kiss here, which they do at times, it is in that tonguey mode that makes sure to show all mouths to the camera. In her writings Hamano mentions that one of the biggest discomforts of actresses when she was an assistant director (and one of the reasons she claims some actresses treated her badly), especially actresses from mainstream cinema, was not only that of becoming naked for the camera but being "seen naked" in this way precisely by another woman. (Hamano, *Onna*).
- ⁵¹ As Kinsey noted, "an individual who is really responding is as incapable of looking happy as the individual who is being tortured." Cited in Williams, *Screening Sex*, 162.
- ⁵² One blogger asks: "What is erotic about that?"
- ⁵³ Hamano often cites a moment at a film festival when someone mentioned that the most prolific woman filmmaker in Japan was Tanaka Kinuyo, who made six films; she says, "I realized that none of my films were counted," and made the decision to make non-Pink Films.

⁵⁴ The theoretical questions her work raises may only have begun to be opened here—and the issue of what it means (in terms of potential consequences) for a woman scholar to study pornographic genres within the relative conservatism of Japanese studies remain to be seen. Still, it is something worth attempting, if only as a foray into terrain that has not yet been thoroughly explored within Japanese film—and that will require further study in the broader context of sexual representations in horror, in Roman Porno, in AV, in television, and on the internet—beyond the bounds of this more limited project.

RICHIE

The Japanese Eroduction—Inside Out

Donald Richie

*In most spheres, Donald Richie hitched his public persona to traditional Japan—Ozu, ikebana, manners—but anyone looking closely at his career saw a very different and far more complex and contradictory writer. Of course, even readers that failed to stray far from his most famous works got an occasional taste of Richie’s, shall we say, broad tastes. For example, an earthy eroticism is one of the main factors that set *The Inland Sea* (1971) apart from the many bookshelves of postwar commentary on “the Japanese.” But we can trace this back to the beginning of his career.*

*Richie’s underappreciated Occupation novel *The Scorching Earth* (1956) made the sexual politics of both Americans and Japanese the stuff of skewering satire. As one contemporary reviewer put it, “One incident of a drunken blonde and four army captains... says more about the Occupation than a suitcase of sermons.”¹ There is also the little known and lushly illustrated *Erotic Gods: Phallicism in Japan* (1966), what Richie affectionately called “my ochin-chin book.” Throughout this period he directed sometimes shocking Super-8 and 16mm experimental films with some of the most famous artists in the Japanese avant-garde—works replete with nudity, castration, blood and excrement and other features we associate with the Pink Film. However, Richie’s references were always literary and high, and one suspects this is precisely why he came to attack the Pink Film so vigorously in his 1973 *Film Comment* essay “Sex and Sexism in the Eroduction.” As the reader will discover below this was hardly a knee-jerk screed against pornography, but rather a rueful disappointment at the missed opportunity Pink Film presented.*

*No, Richie was a user. He frequented Pink theaters and the authority with which he wrote “Sex and Sexism in the Eroduction” speaks to his “deep viewing.” At the very same time, anyone who studies the Pink Film in situ—as opposed to archival prints, film festival screenings, or home video—knows that the Pinks cannot be separated from their reception context. Richie left this aspect of his studies to the darkness of the theaters when he wrote the *Film Comment* piece, which appears to be part of a larger “project” on Japanese sexuality. This “research” would not leak into public view until the publication of his journals in 2005, though he hid nothing from his friends and colleagues around the*

world. Richie was a patron of the Pinks for its entire history, and he readily agreed to my proposal to write a companion piece to “Sex and Sexism in the Eroductioin”—this time focusing not on the texts, but on the reception context and its historical transformation over the decades. Unfortunately, one of his last of many heart attacks left him unable to write. He followed the progress of this book until his death in 2012, disappointed he could not contribute.

It is unfortunate that Richie never completed his “project” on sexuality, but he left a glimpse of it in “Gloriole,” which was dedicated to his friend Susan Sontag. Richie wrote this essay around the same time as “Sex and Sexism in the Eroductioin,” but he never published it. I stumbled upon the typewritten manuscript in his personal papers at Boston University’s Gottlieb Library. The setting is not a Pink Theater, although it was within blocks of the Shinjuku Kokusai Gekijo and many other theaters. However, Richie gestures to the Pink theaters across the city in his afterword, and the dynamics he so vividly portrays are part and parcel of what Pink Film is. He was happy that “Gloriole” could take the place of his original idea.

There is an inside and an outside to the Pink Film: the films and their breathless stars, stories, sights and sounds on the one hand, and on the other the darkly anonymous and quiet patrons that shift in their seats or haunt the theater’s bathrooms.

In pairing these two essays, Donald and I hope to encapsulate the world of early 1970s Pink—inside (and) out.

—Abé Mark Nornes

Inside: The Japanese Eroductioin

Both economically and psychologically, the eroduction (a Japanese portmanteau-term coined from “erotic production”) is an interesting cinematic phenomenon. In these days of fallen box-office receipts it makes back its costs within the first several weeks of release; in these times of half-empty movie theaters, it plays to full houses; now that the ordinary Japanese motion-picture no longer captures belief nor stirs imagination, the eroduction continues to command the attention of a loyal audience.

One of the reasons for this is that Japan, unlike other civilized countries, has no porno houses. The eroductions are the limpest of soft-core, and though there is much breast and buttock display, though there are simulations

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of intercourse, none of the working parts are ever shown. Indeed, one pubic hair breaks an unwritten but closely-observed code. Though this last problem is solved by shaving the actresses, the larger question remains: how to stimulate when the means are missing.

The rigidity of Japanese law in this regard is to be observed in film showing as a whole. Japanese production must remain within certain limits, and when it does not—as was the case with certain Nikkatsu pictures this year—the company is sued by the Metropolitan Police and a full scale court case follows. Imported films also are no exception to the general rule. Pasolini's *The Decameron* (1971) is chaotic because so many scenes are missing; *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) is hard to follow because the film goes out of focus (an alternative to snipping) during all nude scenes; *I Am Curious (Yellow)* (1967) has 41 scenes blacked out with the title “Censored.”

A further curiosity was the Japanese presentation of *Woodstock* (1970). In several of the scenes nude couples wander in the distance. Though perhaps unnoticed in many countries, the sharp eyes of the Japanese censor instantly detected this irregularity. A number of employees were equipped with small scraping needles and painstakingly scraped the emulsion from the offending parts. When the film was consequently projected, the distant strolling couples seemed girded with fireworks. Though this called instant attention to what the censors were presumably attempting to hide, the letter of the law had been observed—a result that satisfies all censors everywhere.

In Japan, consequently, the eroduction is needed, no outlet for prurient interest or simple curiosity being found elsewhere. Though any number of privately-made Blue Movies are around, they are expensive, difficult to obtain, and dangerous to show. For the average, interested movie-goer, the eroduction is all there is.

Thus, unlike other countries where a free access to pornography has resulted in a satisfied curiosity, a stilled prurience, and emptier and emptier porno houses, Japan retains a compulsive and relatively obsessed audience. There are perhaps deeper psychological reasons for this—as may be apparent later in these notes—but in any event attendance is good enough that the eroduction business remains a highly successful one.

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Over 20 small companies make some 200 such pictures each year. The shooting-time for each is short—two or three weeks at the most. Studios are seldom used; actual apartments, houses, etc., are seen instead. Wages are low. Actresses receive about \$60 a day, actors as low as \$30. The cost for such a film can be as low as \$2,000, though many cost more, particularly those in part-color.

The released film is triple-billed and leased to a distributing chain which owns its own theaters. There are in Tokyo over 20 such chains (Kanto Films, Okura Productions, Tokyo Kyoe, Roppo, etc.) and the profits from the film are divided in such a way that the 70 cents per picture average admission price (\$2 for the triple bill) is divided: 12 cents to the original producing company, 8 to the distribution company, and 50 to the theater.

This division would seem unfair to the production company owning no theaters, but there are actually very few such. Usually, the production company, the distribution chain, and the theater management all belong to the same corporation. The profits are therefore both total and considerable. There are over 30 production theaters in Tokyo (and probably over 250 in all of Japan) with an average capacity of 800 per house; they are open daily from ten in the morning to ten at night, and they are usually well-filled. Given the small original budget, the low cost of overhead, the profits are great—much greater proportionally than those enjoyed by the producing companies of ordinary films.

The situation is somewhat analogous to that of the porno houses of America, where the product costs very little, upkeep is negligible, and admission prices are high. Differences would include the amounts of money authorities must sometimes be paid to allow public showings, and a capricious public which is not to be depended upon.

In Japan the production is the only type of picture that retains an assured audience. The mass audience has fallen off disastrously in the last decade. Two of the majors (Shintoho and Daiei) are no longer in existence, Nikkatsu has gotten into trouble trying to turn out high-class porno, and the finances of Toho, Toei, and Shochiku cannot be described as good. There exist, however, smaller, isolated audiences—and among these none are more faithful than that for the production.

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An assured audience means a standard product. It is only in times of economic disaster that different formulas are tried and experimentation is indulged. If commercial cinema in Japan is now changing its content along with its form, it is only because the assured audience has largely disappeared. The eroduction, however, has its own loyal audience and this has resulted in its becoming a codified form of entertainment. Like the Indian spectacle, the Betty Grable musical, the sword-fight *chambara*, the Joan Crawford woman's-film—all cinematic forms which enjoyed a stable audience—the eroduction is formula-film.

Thus, as a genre, the eroduction is predetermined. Since the audience knows what it is to get, it need not be informed. Consequently, the films' titles are decorative rather than descriptive. *Intercourse before Marriage* (*Kenzen koshi*), *I Can't Wait for Night* (*Yoru made matenai*), *Wriggling* (*Notauchi*)—all these tell nothing about their respective contents. They merely make the ritual statement of intent to titillate, the presumed intention of all eroductions.

Likewise, the length of each film is predetermined. Since each is intended to be shown with two others, the ideal length decided upon is 6,500 feet, or 70 minutes. Further codifications are then introduced into the structure of the film itself. In theory, directors are instructed to aim at some kind of sex scene every five minutes; in practice, however, it has proved almost impossible to construct a story-line which allows this, with the results that sex scenes are sometimes fewer but longer.

Also predetermined, though perhaps not so consciously, is the interior shape of the film. One comes to recognize the component parts, just as in Arab cinema one comes to expect the cabaret-sequence; in the *jidai-geki*, the final sword fight; in the western, the last shoot out; etc. In the eroduction these necessary parts would be: establishing sequence, plot sequence, defiling sequence, consequence sequence, and concluding sequence. The connecting tissue may vary with the story, but some or all of the predetermined sequences are invariable.

Since the ostensible intent of the eroduction is to arouse, the establishing sequence usually shows the beginning if not the conclusion of a sexual act. Common among these are: tipsy bar hostess being escorted home by inflamed customers; hiking girls being offered and accepting rides from plainly untrustworthy gentlemen in automobiles; unmotivated sexual acts during

which conversation establishes that this is her first time. From these beginnings grow scenes which establish that sexual union is taking place.

The plot sequence follows at once. This establishes that: the drunken hostess has really fallen into the hands of a white- (or yellow-) slaver; the girls are not to be shown the good time they perhaps expected but, rather, are to be painfully raped by numbers of men; the despoiler of the now-repentant ex-virgin was not actually interested in these now-wasted charms—rather he was really captured by those of a virginal younger sister, etc.

With such tragic complications occurring so soon, one rightly suspects that the eroductions are about something other than the joys of sexual union. The next sequence confirms this—it is about the denigration of women. Bar hostess, good-time girls, ex-virgin—all are given a very bad time. Common are: scenes where, in order to escape, women must run nude through the fields or the streets; scenes where nude or near-nude women are overtaken in muddy rice-paddies, knocked down, mauled, and dirtied by their attackers; scenes where women are blackmailed into, or are in other ways compelled to give themselves to, various perversions, the overwhelmingly most common being: tied up, hung by wrists, being savagely beaten, being otherwise mistreated with sticks, lighted candles, and—oddly, but an eroduction favorite—long-handled shoe-horns.

The consequences of such excess are depicted in the following sequence. These are various and include women—never men—coming to see the error of their ways through the humiliations of venereal disease and unwanted pregnancy. Among the more spectacular, however, and occurring often enough to deserve some comment is that, though the attackers are shown simulating every symptom of unbridled lust except the ultimate, it is eventually they who most suffer. Having finally achieved his way, the hero is suddenly unable to perform. This is not, as one might expect, seen as a consequence of his own rashness; rather, it is always, somehow, the woman's fault. (Naturally, this failure is never once seen as human and amusing; indeed, as entertainment, the eroduction is unique in being both risible and humorless.) The failure is a tragedy for which woman is to blame.

This leads directly to the concluding sequence where repentance and remorse are the emotions most often simulated. If the girl has been bad, she will now be good; if merely unfortunate, she will now be prudent; if hurt,

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she must simply live with the knowledge of an abortion or a ruined younger sister; if dead (as she is in a surprising number of instances), short shrift is made of her personal existence—rather, she becomes a symbol for the general dangerousness of sex, and heads are shaken, wise words spoken.

If she is dead she has often become so as a result of the “impotence” sequence. Unable to express baffled emotions, the man resorts to strangling, shooting, knifing, etc. (A typical scene occurred in *Black Snow* [*Kuroi yuki*, 1965], a film for which Nikkatsu Films was taken to court: the young man unable to express himself in any other way blew out the brains of his girl friend just as she was climaxing in response to his dextral stimulation.) Since, somehow, it was all the woman’s fault anyway, the eroduction audience (entirely male, watching a film made entirely by males) finds that this murder is to be regarded sympathetically. It was perhaps unkind, but, after all, the hero was experiencing the worst humiliation a man can know, so what else was he to do?

More often, however, man and woman agree to part. After such extended sexual encounters, such pain, such pleasure, the feeling is that it was somehow not worth it—flesh is grass, waste the result. They go their separate ways, sadder, wiser, and the screen darkens. This conclusion is, when you consider it, surprising in a film the announced aim of which was mere titillation.

But then, like most formula film, the eroduction is of two minds about its subject. Unable to dwell upon a detailed examination of the sex act—as is, say, American pornography—the eroduction must sublimate and take that path which occasionally, in other kinds of film, reaches the summits of art. All the way along, however, it hankers after what it legally cannot have. Its compromises further distort its already myopic view of reality. American pornography is kept forever on its elemental level because, showing all, it need show nothing else; Japanese eroductions have to do something else since they cannot show all. This stultified impulse has created some extraordinary works of art, a few films among them. None of these, however, are found among eroductions. What the Japanese genre has done, however, is to reflect or create a kind of mythology.

The producers of the eroduction believe that they have discovered a money-making recipe; the patrons of the eroduction think they have found a

harmless and inexpensive way of killing a few hours. Both, however, would seem to share further assumptions, and these one must deduce. In the main they share a belief, a myth—and the denominator of this common agreement is invariable: to be completely enjoyed a woman must be completely denigrated.

How different are the various myths suggested by the pornography of other countries! Even if an amount of sadism is involved it is always plainly labeled, never suggested as the norm, something which invariably occurs in Japanese eroductions. Though the women in Western pornography may be a bit more forward than is common in Western life, her only motivation is to have and to give a good time. That she is bold, even brazen, suits her audience. Indeed, if a man did not require that kind of woman he probably would not be sitting in a porno house.

The Japanese eroduction is very different. Woman must be denigrated and she must deserve to be. The ways in which this is shown are various, but the conclusions are identical. Often, for example, the woman has had some prior experience. Since she is no longer a virgin, she is ritually unclean and, it would therefore seem, deserves all that she gets. Again, however, if the woman is still a virgin, her culpability is evidenced in other ways. A simple crush, or mere attraction for some young, clean-cut type, suffices. He shortly vanishes from the film (his sole function having been to uncover her low, animal nature) and she proceeds to be warmly punished. Or a man may not even be involved. Instead, she is sometimes observed in amorous dalliance with another girl—a spectacle some men find exciting which establishes her worthlessness at once.

One recognizes here an inverted idealism, particularly as regards the state of virginity. Pornography is typically puritanical about the virgin state. Women are presumed (for very suspicious reasons) to be better than human, and the hymen is proof of this—they emerge from the creator's hands clean, pure, factory-sealed as it were. Being human, women naturally do not long remain in this state, to the chagrin of romantically-minded males. Since they are no longer pure they must then be made completely impure. It is thus that women who naturally, humanly, warmly acknowledge their emotional needs are regarded as vicious.

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Men who so acknowledge their needs are, of course, not. It is here, in this rigid belief in a double-standard which it either observes or creates, that the hypocrisy of the eroduction is greatest. It would follow, then, that man in the throes of passion is always somehow noble; that the woman, in the same situation, is always ignoble.

This curiously inverted, perhaps even oddly chivalric but certainly unrealistic attitude, is visible even in the ways in which love scenes are photographed. The woman is often completely nude and is observed as a hysterical animal. The man, on the other hand, is always at least partially clothed and, thus appearing in the raiments of civilization, does not suffer common nudity. While she screams, kicks, and in general abandons herself, he remains thoughtful, calm, a dedicated craftsman.

Her focus of interest is upon the loins, both his and her own. His, however, is upon the breasts, and much footage is expanded on scenes of their being caressed and aroused. This reinforces the idea of the man as being above it all (in both senses of the word). And since he is therefore not directly involved in the essentials of the act, he appears disinterested, civilized, somehow a nobler person than she. He is immune to the vagaries of undisciplined emotion (all women are latent lesbians, homosexuality among men is unknown), to the tyranny of a jaded palate (scenes of simulated fellatio are very common, scenes of cunnilingus extremely rare). In every way the man shows that he is, obviously, a much better person.

He also displays—and this is something which the eroduction-makers do not intend—an extremely immature relationship with women. Precisely, he reenacts the mother-child relationship. Mother is cast as bad-woman; bad-woman is cast as mother. Even in those scenes where the suspended and unfortunate girl is about to be tortured, there are ritual breast fondlings which would seem to indicate an extremely ambivalent male attitude.

One might simplify and say that, if the man with the whip shows the average eroduction customer himself as he would like to be, the same man kneeling in near-adoration before the breasts shows him as he truly is. To insist upon this, however, would not explain why Japanese eroductions are really, if unconsciously, concerned with depicting a lovehate relationship of major proportions.

The hatred takes the form of undisguised sadism. The hero has turned his neurosis into a perversion and, while this may be more healthy for him, it offers no help to the audience. At the same time, anyone engaging in active sadism is, among other things, proclaiming a profoundly-felt inadequacy. The impotence syndrome observed in some of these pictures supports and explains, at least on a plot level, this inadequacy. At the same time there is ample reason everywhere to see this sadism as merely inverted masochism. Just as idealism is plainly inverted in these pictures to create the universal bad woman, so natural masochism is also inverted to create these endless torture scenes which presumably so engage the audience.

It is presumed that the audiences are engaged, or else they would not be in the theater. Yet, one might also ask if they are not merely enduring rather than enjoying such savage spectacles in an effort to extract a mite of titillation. In other words, are we not seeing the fantasy of the jaded eroduction executive, rather than viewing an anthropologically interesting attitude on the part of the average eroduction-goer?

That the eroductions fill a social need, no matter how poorly, is beyond doubt. Throughout the decade during which they have been made in any number, the audience has continued to grow. And, though they may sometimes resemble the soft-core quickies shown on Times Square or the naughty nudies shown in Soho, the differences are at once apparent. Those foreign pictures are often little comedies, little melodramas. Innocent of overtone, happy to display the allowed quotient of female flesh, they babble their way to the final reel, mindless and ephemeral. The Japanese eroduction, on the other hand, can be seen as tortured, dark, involved—plainly of psychological import.

The eroduction-makers would claim that I delve too deeply, that their hour-long fantasies were never intended to bear the weight of investigation. And, as for the excessive scenes of torture, well, you have to have some kind of story, and you cannot have plot without good, strong conflict. We make an honest living, they would tell me, because we give our public what it wants. That the public always wants a cheap, safe thrill is their contention; and this, they claim, is all that the eroduction provides.

I would maintain that it provides considerably more—that it, in fact, provides an outlet for the often stultified animosity which all men everywhere

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must feel toward women from time to time. It expresses this in second-hand terms which, precisely because they do not arouse the intelligence, are potent indeed in arousing and exhausting the emotions. This is because they are dealing with archetypal situations, the essence of the eroduction myth. Like most formula film, the eroduction is also mythic cinema. Here one may go and see a common fantasy endlessly repeated.

This repetition must reassure at least some members of the audience, because the fantasy is an infantile one. That woman is an enemy is a sensation that all men have experienced, but it is not one that we usually or necessarily believe. We may cast woman in this role but we do not long keep her there. Yet this is precisely what the eroduction does. With a truly compulsive insistence, it monomaniacally maintains that the nursery vision is the only one, that woman is evil, that man is her prey, and that sex is her instrument.

A too-cursory glance at the films might seem otherwise—it is the women after all who are being beaten and shoe-horned. Actually, however, prolonged viewing indicates that the tortures almost invariably result from fear felt by the men. They are doing the women in, before the women have a chance to do them in. That this is an extremely primitive view of the male-female relationship is obvious, but it is as basic as it is barbaric. It lurks in the mind of every man, and only his knowledge and love and good-will can bridge this gap to make happy relations between the sexes possible at all. This is matched by a fear within the woman, and it is her trust and self-knowledge which completes the bridge connecting herself and a man. The eroduction, however, is not concerned with happy relations. Indeed, it does not believe in them. It encourages in the spectator a rigid dichotomy of thought, and offers ample provocation to every latent love-hate neurosis in the theater.

Which is perhaps why the eroduction cannot afford to be human, altruistic, fair-minded. Every speech, every action must be instantly and compulsively related back to woman's voracious sexual appetite. In an eroduction even a remark about the weather carries innuendo. One is caught in a catatonic, changeless state where every action springs but from one cause, where everyone is caught, fixed forever, by his own ambivalent sexuality. It is a world where generosity, freedom, love are unknown. This is the world of the solitary, the domain of the voyeur.

Naturally, the eroduction is, like all pornographic production, masturbatory cinema. The audience is not thinking about women; it is thinking about itself. The most elemental of fantasies being acted before them, they are caught, trapped in their own elemental and hence infantile nature.

In Japan the eroduction seems to be a habit, like smoking, drinking, biting the nails. Its gratifications are instant, meaningless, and necessary. Quite accidentally and (even now) unknowingly, the makers of eroductions have tapped an audience of great financial potential. For this reason the films can afford to be shoddy, badly done, unerotic to an extreme, and often ludicrously inept. The economic phenomenon is firmly based upon the psychological phenomenon. The eroduction theater in this sense shares much with the bar and the race-track.

And, like these male retreats, it is essentially harmless. Working out a fantasy never caused anyone any trouble. But, at the same time, the patrons of the eroductions must receive some rather strange ideas of the world they live in—because the point about fantasy is that the real world is, after all, different.

Outside: Gloriole

Nevertheless, I understood why sexuality, like crime, is an imperishable resource of the impersonal.

—Susan Sontag

The door locks and it is darker inside the cubicle, square, a meter wide, two meters high, with no ceiling. Between the feet glows the bowl, a porcelain slit set in the floor.

The walls are plywood, double—a space between, the supports on the outside. A rusty waterpipe runs up one wall and disappears. On the other at hand level is the roll of paper. The holder is rusty, and broken; the paper roll is held by a looped string. The floor is concrete but beneath the shoes it feels like a forest floor—toilet paper, torn magazines, and all those cigarette ends.

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Here in the dark it smells: natural smells—stale air, shit, piss, semen. Earthly smells, odors elemental—of which we are made. Smelling of men, the booth is a tiny world, narrow as a coffin and as secure. Locked into this room with its mossy floor and its odors, one crouches.

One sits, dumb and human, shit sitting on shit, in that most human of postures, the squat. Legs at the armpit, feet straddling, the center of gravity again where it came from, the earth, one is no longer precarious on two tall legs. Squatting, the rear bare and spread, we are home again. The natural posture—natural for shitting, natural for giving birth.

Thus we see it, the vision. It is placed here, precisely aligned with the squatting eye, a hole into the beyond. There, on the other side is a bright replica of this very booth. The hole is like a mirror reflecting the cubicle where we wait, yet we are not in this reflection because we are looking through the wall and into the next booth above which buzzes a single fluorescent tube.

The eye is drawn toward this bright hole, this luminous orifice. It is here that paradise is regained and here that the savior enters.



It is a lancet piercing the anchorites cell; it is the grill in the confessional box; the window of the convict; the shaft of the miner: it is the keyhole promising liberty if but the key appears.

The glory, a corona, an effulgence, an emanation as of light—when this aureole appears the worshipper, is invaded, pervaded, entered into, and becomes one with. It is violently other and it is inhuman yet it contains within itself, both literally and metaphorically, all that is also human. Squatting is near kneeling and this is fitting, for the aureole is the deity.



Let us look at the dim prayers which adorn the walls of this cell. Some are short, pithy, terse; others are long as stories. Some are imperative, some are hortatory. Many are illustrated, and drawings of the prescience are everywhere—magical signs to ensure its appearance: if I create it, it will come true.

RICHIE

The place is as though hung with icons, as though lined with votive tablets, all attesting to the power, the demand, the wish, the prayer. All request, want, need. Though the words are various they all mean the same: make me whole, make me real.



This authenticity of the aureole is its major attribute. Its presence is its supreme authenticity. That it appears is its own proof, and it is this appearance, this visitation, for which the prayers exist.

But first there is suspense and solitary waiting. Sometimes it does not appear and sometimes what appears is not it. Often it is glimpsed from afar only to disappear forever; again it may approach only to withdraw. Dieties are capricious.

One is humbled during this wait, squatting, the stench rising from the pit one straddles, the smoke from the third cigarette rising like incense. One thirsts for ambrosia, hungers for manna, one is starving in the dark, yet this wait is necessary. Otherwise how could the illumination be fully felt, the mystical experience truly and authentically appreciated in all of its life-and-death seriousness? For love has pitched his tent within the place of excrement, sings the poet. But to believe this one must first need love.



Love. What all else it may also mean, love presumes a need for the beloved. Without this, life loses its savour, becomes mere, meaningless existence. The beloved may live only in the mind, may indeed may never be encountered, but without the thought of somewhere, somehow, this beloved's being, approaching, coming nearer and nearer—without it life is hopeless.

One needs the beloved, needs the person who has become it or needs that idea it is still possible. And the need is felt because one feels oneself incomplete, inauthentic, without the reassuring gaze of the other, the beloved.

We all wait for this. Those who squat and wait are but one of the myriad varieties.



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After the waiting watcher has smoked one cigarette or ten the visitation suddenly begins. Footsteps and the closing of the door in the other booth. The hole darkens as a shadow passes.

It is, of course, as yet merely another man. Perhaps he has but come to add his shit. Or, perhaps, he is evil and will taunt. Or, worst, perhaps he is another suppliant and the two of you, invisible to the other, will squat the night, any passing presences sent on their way because there is no room for them.

A glimpse will ascertain but glimpsing is not that easy. The hole is now loosely plugged with toilet paper. It was one's own hand that inserted this paradoxical paper which serves as shield from what one most wants. A small section of the hole, however is left open: one does not want to be spied upon but one does want to spy. The paper is like camouflage and one peers through its fronds as though at a wild beast.

The cloth of a coat, the shiny seat of a pair of pants; the sudden flash of underwear, then as the man squats the blinding glare of raw flesh. Or, as he stands and turns and sees the wadded hole. Then the slam of the door as he departs—no one wants to be spied upon. Or, the hesitation and then the glimpse of a bare thigh as he hesitates.

His cubicle is also hung with prayers. Such is the nature of these that they both supplicate and inform. They sing of delights past or of delights to come; they magnify these twin chapels and write of other visitations in fulsome details.

The thigh has not moved. Perhaps he is standing, pants around his knees, reading these messages, himself strangely stirred by what he studies. Perhaps he has seen the hole, mute and modest, located at the level of his loins.

The thigh hesitates. A hand scratches a knee. The eye on the other hole shifts, trying to see further. The face is pressed against the wall, the nose is flattened, the eye turns as in torment. I want to see, please let me see, for to see is already to possess.

A digression but a necessary one since it describes an assumption upon which the illumination rests. It is this: the longed-for revelation is predicted upon a loss of self; further, it is the loss of self which makes the revelation attractive and consequently sought.

To explain: self is often experienced as a burden which one wishes to put down. There are many ways of doing this: there is religion, alcohol, drugs, gambling, fast driving, music, and many of the hobbies. And there is love, including, of course, the most famous of these palliatives, sex.

During this last one does not know who one is anymore, one goes out of one's head, one's mind is blown. This means a blessed respite from the chore of being oneself.

But this self, this personality, is in itself merely the result of an agreement which has been reached. A maze of deductions and inferences successfully threaded has resulted in one's idea of who one is.

Perhaps the universal willingness to relinquish this self indicates that the persona does not truly fit. Like a badly cut coat it binds and chafes. We are forever anxious to take it off.

Its removal, however, exposes to a painful degree. If I am not this, what I thought I was, then I am not anything at all. If I relinquish my personality, homemade though it is, then I am no one. Thus, simply taking off the garment and standing naked is to substitute one unwanted state for one unwanted still more.

If, however, there is a reason—no matter how slight—for folding the personality away for a time, then there is also a way of doing it. One does it through joining.

The joining maybe literal, as in sex, or it may be metaphorical—one joins the Communist Party or the Catholic Church. One gives oneself, surrenders oneself to something larger: the bowling league, the cocktail party, the varieties of mystical experience. All share in common that they absorb the self and for a time dissolve it. Hence one can feel fully free, freed of self, by further joining.

True freedom is to be achieved only within limitations since these limits define freedom itself. To be entirely free is a meaningless impossibility. To be relatively free, within the chosen limitations, is the only way of being free at all. Self is safely lost only by decreasing an ideal freedom—through the results of the larger social entity, the bottle, the needle, or the little room I am describing.



The thigh hesitates and the eye searches. That which is seen is already possessed. That is, its essence has been apprehended, which is to say that an essence has been attributed.

A woman glimpsed bathing nude, Susanna, becomes *the* woman. Her personal attributes fall to her feet: her nudity has made her anonymous. Since she is now unknown, nameless, featureless, she can become known in a further sense—known as the archetype, the symbol, the entity. Woman is what she in this only seemingly paradoxical manner has become.

An essence also becomes an object. If we attribute the essential, we also presume the possession. It is our ownership of the attribution that makes it visible to us. Susanna nude becomes ours in the sense that her entity as an object is ours. We elders do not presume any further possession—not at first.

To attribute the essential is both to denude and to enrich. First, the human is stripped of all human elements. This is essential. Susanna loses not only her shift but also her features, her position, everything with which she has surrounded herself to construct the personality essential to her. This we have captured and discarded at first glimpse. Now, we reclothe her by constructing an absolute to contain her. She may be given mythical, even god-like attributes; all the invisible garments of our imagination are laid upon her. It is as an object that she becomes holy.

Thus, while hiding by the stream or crouched in our little room, we deprive our object of those very resources of which we ourselves for a time hope to be free—our tiresome personality—and at the same time we give it those—wholeness and authenticity—which we crave. The rape of the eye is give and take.

Yet, Susanna dare not see the elders. She must be unconscious of them, not even know that they are there. It is only her innocence of their presence that can maintain their chosen illusion. If she sees them, she is no longer an object. She is Godiva whose flaunted nudity threatens to turn us all into objects ourselves.

This reversal is discomfiting. We become what we wanted her to be. The person who chooses to spy unbeknownst is most in need of that cloak of subjectivity which the clear and denuding gaze of another refuses.



But what of love, the reassuring gaze of the other, the beloved? One can answer only that there are many gazes and not all emanate from the eye. The squatter is of a clan which cannot or in any event does not tolerate the gaze direct. His longed-for look is placed elsewhere and for him the seat of the soul is not the eye. The eye at whose appearance he luxuriates in wholeness is blind, but an eye none the less.



This eye in the hole fears, indeed, one thing above the rest. This is the appearance on the other side of the aperture, of not the abstract and awaited glory, but of another particular, human, inquiring eye. The spied is suddenly the spied upon. His role as subject possible only if he has an object—is instantly snatched from him.

Worse, he knows only too well the owner of that impertinent orb. It is his own, or one so like it that the difference is nothing. Thus that croucher in the adjoining cubicle is not the other. It is himself. The affronted subject, thinking to escape himself has only succeeded in meeting himself.

The crouching eye needs as he needs; wants as he wants. It is a fellow sufferer who has also made his way into the tabernacle, who also comes to pray. Yet this understanding brings no compassion. It brings only hatred—self-hatred, the very emotion from which both wished to escape.

The two stare through the hole—eyeball to eyeball—each feeling identical emotions of frustration, disappointment, and despair. The watcher can-

not be the watched. This is a short-circuit, a feedback. It destroys communication: the experience ceases.

It happens sometimes, however, such being the flexibility of human nature, that one of the subjects will decide—anything being better than nothing—to play the object. One eye is suddenly withdrawn. The view of the other is at once composed of a pair of trousers, a rapidly unzipped fly, and the appearance of the longed for, at first flaccid but rapidly assuming the rigidity, the itselfness that is presumably desired.

What next occurs depends upon the degree of need within the remaining subject. Will he accept the pseudo-object, the false god? Often the result is departure and a furiously slammed door. The subject is not only disappointed; he is outraged that such a sham should have taken place. The outrage is moral. He is shocked and angry that a palpable untruth should have been so flagrantly flaunted.



His morality is outraged because it is based upon a sense of difference. It is this difference which the other has violated. This is because of an assumption that difference attracts and similarity repels. It is common knowledge among the parishioners that that the darkened cell is for the subject and the lighted cell is for the object. These degrees of light and dark symbolize the very way things should be. For a subject to put himself into an objective position is close to sacrilege because it violates a holy order.

And a natural one. Men are attracted to women and women to men because of their differences. When one is confined to a single sex then other kinds of differences must be observed: the girl and the woman, the pupil and the teacher, the truck driver and the executive, the subject and the object.

Or, the man and the god. Though the god is only another man, in this manifestation he—or more precisely it—is given divine qualities. But only if a proper degree of difference is evidenced.

Initial unconsciousness is one of these. He must not know what is to occur. Preferably, the god comes to shit. And it is while he is crouching, like any human, that he notices the prayers and begins to read them. He is aroused, but unwillingly so. Yet he continues this perusal and in so doing turns his

head and sees the waiting orifice and the flimsy toilet—paper barrier behind which the subject waits. Ideally, the import of the prayers having entered him, he is torn between curiosity and fear—the unknown lurks on the other side, and the unknown is a quality we desire and yet are also afraid of.

Then, after a long period of indecision (suspense for the one on the other side of the hole) the man lumbers to his feet, but he is mere man no longer. The prayers have been efficacious and the god-head is visible—the eye in the hole sees it and knows that his own prayers have been answered: the diety has appeared.



So has the required sense of difference. Dark and light, squatting and standing, the seer and the seen, man and god. And, finally, the corona—tumescence.

It does not follow that the squatting viewer might not also be. But it does follow that, if so, it does not count. He cannot have any divine attributes because he has willed against his having any. Strictly, he has none left for himself because he has given them all away to the longed-for on the other side of the hole. What has occurred is, from his vantage point, a kind of miracle.



What has also occurred is a kind of seduction. Innocence has been once more suborned by knowledge, ignorance by experience. And there is a special quality to this seduction. The pure of heart, the sinless, the guiltless, one free from all blame and censure, the spotless and the unsullied, the blameless, untainted and immaculate—it is he, all these attributes, who has been tempted and who succumbs.

We are obviously not involved in an ordinary seduction where one more wiley has his way with another. Rather, we are involved with something larger, with the very idea of seduction itself, with something approaching the abstract of a seduction.

Personalities are not involved. The squatter is attempting to lose his and at the same time forbidding the god to have one. Thus the seduction can also be seen to resemble another successful sexual attack which also depends

upon the anonymity of the pair, and the precise roles of subject and object. This seduction is also a rape.

The difference is compounded. It is not so much the difference between the experienced and the innocent as it is between the passive waiting watcher and the active and unconscious watched. It is one of those rapes where the passive watcher wins by in turn being, as it were, tempted—a temptation which he himself arranged. The mighty have fallen and the meek inherit the earth—the bent shall again be straight.



Who is it that says the man crouching in the nearer cell is bent? Why, the man himself. It is his opinion that he is crooked. He no longer retains the old meaning of bent to describe what he sees as his condition, but he still retains the equally old term to denote his presumed opposite—straight.

The squatter is of that variety who chooses what he feels to be the most opposite to himself. Otherwise he would not be in the booth but in the bars and other gathering places constructed by and for his general kind. His particular kind, however, can find no solace, no reward in these. To him they are sterile halls of mirrors, these places. Like all suppliants, he is not in his cubicle to give; he is there—like any churchgoer—to take.

Hence his outrage when this natural order of things is subverted and when the outrageous eye on the other side of hole not only makes it impossible by his presence for an authentic deity to enter, but even ventures to impersonate him.

But even here, in this rigid dichotomy of an almost Islamic severity, rationality intrudes. Is not this eye that, perhaps, that of—not a fellow congregationalist, but—a true deity, a slightly experienced one, who, once fallen, has been again tempted and who now, slightly wiser, is simply attempting to ascertain that the subject is indeed on the other side of what he must regard as a confessional hole? Yes, that is what has happily occurred. As though to speak, the suppliant on the other side moves his mouth near to the hole. As though mumbling prayers, he begins to move his lips.

The necessary has been reconstructed. The standing man on the far side is now subjected to the depersonalization and the attributization that the true

god would have received. The resulting experience for the squatting recipient is (almost) as satisfying as if the deity had been real. He asks for everything, but he is satisfied with something small which he, in turn, transmutes into something large. He asks for glory and he receives the gloriole.



He deals in signs, in amulets, in tokens as do we all. His, however, are of a definitive variety. The hope, the glimpse, the vision, the proof: these are all encompassed within one object—a true object in that it is a thing, and is even commonly called such.

That patch of skin seen through the hole, each hair visible in the overhead light—this opposite flesh has been turned to marble. It has—even this bit of skin—been given all the attributes of durability and timelessness. It is a part of the original tissue of the universe, miraculously made visible, palpable. It lies there, just beyond touch, just within the range of the gaze. The flesh has petrified into the idea of flesh. It is no longer the common, human covering. It has been revealed: it is itself an element.

A chemical is broken into its component parts. There is no further discovery when the element appears and this both terminates and creates the discovery. It marks the end of our knowledge and the limits of science. Beyond all is magic. Love does something similar. The beloved is seen as not only unique in the entire world but also of a different density, as it were: more compact, more filled, more itself. We feel that it is our apprehension of this which has created our hence quite logical love. However, it is just as likely that our love has created, that is, attributed this apprehension.

As for us, so for the watching eye. The object, the thing, becomes unique, the only one in the world, but it also stands for all such objects everywhere. The thing has a density which is both human and superhuman. It transcends and so the experience becomes transcendental.



The transcendental...that which is higher than and not included under any of the ten categories of scholastic philosophy; that existing apart, and not subject to the limitation of the material universe; that which is presupposed in a transcendent experience and necessary to it.

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And that which is already in itself a unity. The transcendental is whole. In a fragmented world the transcendental is complete. Its presence, its entity is unriven.

Which is why this presence is healing. It is, specifically good; a transcendental bad is unthinkable. And, because it itself is unity, it unifies.



Returning, backing out of the booth, to the desperate and dichotomized world, we see—having glimpsed a form of the infinite—what it is that sex of any kind, drink, drugs, fast driving, gambling, good music, and religion all have in common; it is that they allow or insist upon a temporary unification. We are united, for a time, when we give ourselves to them.

Precisely, it is a unification of qualities we had thought opposite: mind and body, thought and action, we and they. It is possible because the mind (which alone makes these distinctions) has been stilled by something greater than itself—by a unity which it itself is notoriously incapable of creating.



These periods of mindless wholeness are when we feel most alive, when we feel put together. Also, when we feel most ourselves—paradoxically because it is just the self we leave behind during such an experience, and it is this leaving behind which, indeed, makes the experience possible.

The self (whichever one we are talking about) does choose its own experience, however. It is the self which decides to be a drunkard or an addict, a gambler, or workaholic or a Wagnerian or to spend hours in our little cubicle.

The choice is usually single. The self only knows one way to transcendental unity and he takes that way whenever he can.



Back to particulars. The thigh, the patch of skin is still there, on the other side of the hole. It is, indeed, the whole which creates the spectacle. Without it we would have nothing, or we would have the whole man, standing, pants around ankles, combing his hair, or looking at his watch, or whatever he is actually doing. The view depends upon the frame. The desired abstraction of

the other begins with this visual abstraction, a skin—colored circle, the part standing for the whole.

Frames isolate—the Velasquez moves only within its frame, the landscape is poignant only from the moving frame of the railway window, the room is mysterious only when glimpsed through the frame of the open doorway. One of the reasons is that any reality is based upon what is unperceived about it: it is the unseen which produces authenticity. Another is that it is precisely the unseen which is unknown and it is this unknown complication which allows our imagination to lend beauty, poignancy, mystery. Yet another, perhaps the most important, is that the frame cuts *us* off.

We are spectators and it is from this position that we move forward and join. The transcendental is primarily a visual manifestation—I know nothing of a transcendental sound or smell or taste. We see it first and we move toward it, and eventually, mindlessly, we become one with it.



At present we are still merely observing it (or attempting to), mumbling our prayers. The patch of thigh turns, reveals a patch of hair, but the line of the leg or its position, or the angle of the hole refuses to reveal the sought-for sight which we know is *there*, just outside the line of vision.

Something is occurring within us. Tension. As each move in this elaborate encounter has been made, the tension has grown, the emotions have been drawn more and more taut. The mind, like a camera eye at its smallest aperture, has centered upon this single thought, this longed-for vision, this pin-point which is utter reality. The brain aroused has erected itself into this single ray pointed straight through the hole and into the experience which awaits.

The mind thinks of nothing else and the body experiences nothing but this pervading tenseness. Every muscle is hard and strained. The blood pounds, the eye bulges. One has become, oneself, tumescent.



But let us also observe and consider the surroundings. We are in a public toilet, others are coming and going. We are considering an often forbidden

form of sexual union within this public place. Thus we are courting a number of dangers.

Given the commonly proscribed nature of the hoped-for encounter we would much better be in the safety of our own room—or indeed anyplace less public than this. And given its forbidden nature we are prey to a number of possibilities. Just who, for example, is on the other side of the whole? Blackmail, the agent provocateur, the cops...all are possibilities. Also, to populate the imagination, are the cleaning lady, the janitor, and members of the establishment on whose premises the toilet is located.

All of this has, of course, been considered. The chances of detection have been weighed against the chances for safety. Also the probability of disaster is being savored. Like a pervading odor or flavor, it permeates the experience. It is not that one wants to be caught. It is not that simple. It is that one wants the feeling of danger that the possibility of being caught creates.

There are doubtless many reasons for this. Among them the most germane is that danger is one of the most authentically felt of all realities. Almost nothing is so instantly perceived as actual. It thus augments this experience which is, in reality, a quest for authenticity. And danger prolongs unification.

Hot-rodders, chicken races, the bike gang, pro car racers, these are all engaging in activities which prolong through danger the length of unification. Sexually, the unification begins with the thought and occurs all the way through the experience. One is not unified only at orgasm, but also long before it. The entire encounter, whatever it is, is the experience. If danger is added, the experience is lengthened. On the racecourse or before the hole one is unable to think of anything else or, precisely, unable to think. Self is stilled, something which fear and desire have accomplished.



The thigh turns, a panorama of moving flesh, then a patch of pubic hair, then, swinging into view, naked, erect, an arm of flesh, ponderous, filled with its own dignity, pivoting around its human center comes the deity, the god-head itself, showing in profile, in three-quarters view, and in full head-on its inhuman glory. Its single eye calmly regards the hole and the hidden watcher.

The corona flares—the shape of a halo appears. The human is abject in the presence of the deity. The person on the other side has become a mere appendage of his revelation now. And his movements become suddenly pathetic. The way he shifts his feet, the single hand which strokes the emanation, they become filled with the frailty of humanity. He, this simple man, may not know it but he too is the presence of something larger, greater, surpassing. Consequently his human movements become filled with the pathos of human existence.

This the watching eye records but does not consider. The process of thought has stilled as the cyclops eye stares. Finally, the watcher is seen. Hidden, he has been revealed. An effulgence enters, fills: illumination.



We have been viewing this subjectively, as though we were the subject itself. Let us now stand outside and take a harsh view—commonly called objective but, in truth, just as subjective—if at the other end of a moral plane.

What has happened is very simple. We have one sexual pervert waiting for another. Driven by his warped desires one kneels and hopes to receive the other, equally warped. Obsessed and driven by their guilty lust this pair chooses a public place for their display and braves even the likelihood of apprehension to fulfill these desires. Their demeaning act is itself proof of moral degeneracy and, if they are apprehended, punishment is called for, not only to protect the public, but also to protect them from themselves.

This version of the occurrence is one which would not now be common. Perhaps now we would find less harshness, and less fear. Rather, perhaps, one would be found more “troubled” than the other, and some understanding might be offered the kneeling figure—the standing figure the times having already absolved. Nonetheless, there would be more than a hint that the former is having his troubles and that he perhaps poses a slight problem to society at large as well.

In either version, however, condemnation is important. The reason that these attitudes are reconstructed here is not that they have any value in themselves but that they continue to have an enormous value to the squatting watcher. Their idea of him is also his own idea of himself. Or else he would not be waiting for hours in a toilet.



Not that he likes to interpret himself in this fashion. Indeed, he does not like to interpret himself at all, nor does any one of us. Intruding interpretation into an exercise designed to eradicate not only interpretation but thought itself would not be a welcome activity. At the same time, since it is impossible not to have an idea of self, one might look at that indulged in by the watcher as he sees the drama begin to unfold.

It is a third-person fantasy. The self is stilled and he sees himself savoring the various resolving complications. It is also, by its nature, pornographic, if that means sexually arousing, and like any religious experience (and unlike almost any other kind) it is firmly rooted in the present. It is an instant play-back in which not a second's difference occurs between the sight and the third-person apprehension. One remembers that Saint Theresa saw herself ravished by Christ—it is that kind of hallucination.

Except that it is complicated. The squatting person is predicated by what he has learned of what the public (family, friends) think about people who squat waiting in public toilets. No matter how much or little this applies to any actuality he knows anything about, it is this role which he is also acting out. In this sense, the public wants him to continue to squat in toilets and by the varying degrees of scorn or commiseration it evidences keeps him there—to the degree that he pays any attention to this opinion. Still, any definition is better than no definition and so in his instant—present state he still hears the echoes of the past.

This, of course, lends a savour. He is proving the past wrong, again and again and again. By indulging in the forbidden, he is affirming. And it must be forbidden. If it is not forbidden then his actions can have no real meaning for him.



Worshipping a dark and primeval god, a forbidden deity, in a place agreed upon as filthy: this is important. If, suddenly, all of this were transferred to another plane: if all churches had such cubicles, cheerful, brightly lighted, with a trained priesthood to inhabit the holes; if there was a “social hour” after “prayers” and admonishments not to miss Sunday School, there would

then be no congregation. The squatters of the earth would flee and forsake their god.

The god lives, let us venture, only in that he is forbidden—either by law, by church, or by social sanction. He exists only by the strength of his opposite. It is thus public—opinion which not only creates the waiting watcher but also which, finally, creates the god as well.

Indeed, the hesitating other, the standing man, is not only created by a general opinion, he has also become it. He has been given many of the attributes of the generality: he is innocent, unaware, and he is straight. The waiting watcher is seducing more than a single man—he is seducing the public at large.



This resembles war more than love one might say if one did not know that love and hate are twins and indifference the true opposite. But if it is war, then what a strange kind of battle we are witnessing. The standing man, whether he is actually all of these attributions or not, can only assume after it is over that he, if the dichotomy even occurs to him, has “won.” It is he who has the presumably wanted physical sensation, and it was he who was obviously in control of the entire ritual. He was active throughout and victory, if the concept occurs, is his.

But this is untrue. Or, at most, he may have won a battle and lost a war. The waiting, watching worshipper knows the truth: he has by his presence made this possible; by his will he has made the encounter occur; he has plainly won since he has extracted the admission. It was he who was active throughout and this victory, short-lived, is his alone.

Perhaps his reasons for believing this is that the standing man received the attention only of another man, while the squatting man received the attention of the general public. By making the other into a thing, an object, an entity, a deity—he has swallowed society.

To swallow is to make something one’s own, specifically, it turns into one’s self. A baby indicates its love by putting the beloved object into its mouth. So does the adult. Nuzzling up to a tit and nuzzling up to a cock are

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two manifestations of the same urge. And we all, still in our infancy, associate size with regard: a big breast or a large penis means more love.

The watcher is different only in the degree of his need for palpable and “proven” love; only in the graduation of his range—narrow; and only in range of his awareness. Sucking cock may feel natural to him but it cannot *be* natural since a majority still insists it is not. It consequently becomes two things: it is an act of love, of homage, of need; it is also an act of aggression, a gesture of revolution, and a secret weapon—through it society at large is to be proven wrong, and this is done only by involving society in the act itself.

Of this he is aware—or else he would spend his days happily in the toilet, comforting anyone who chances by. He does not do this: instead, he insists upon the trappings (real enough) of religion, he feels shame if discovered, and guilt if not. He is hidden in his cupboard—in a real psychological and social sense he has not left his closet.



Susanna—after she is discovered she is made an accomplice. Render unto us or we will say you have a lover. A dilemma—what will she do. Since the Bible has a vested interest in her not becoming an accomplice she refuses and is still saved—on technical grounds. But life is not the Bible, which is presumably why it needs it. The object, once interest is aroused, becomes an accomplice and eventually partakes. A new Adam.



The visitation begins. The aureole approaches. It hesitates, an animal at its hole. The thirsting eyes regard, unblinking. Their vision is now plugged by the mighty corona, rays of light seeping from the edges of the filling hole. The paper barricade is sundered, the single-eyed being, ponderous and impervious, irresistible, moves slowly forward, pushing its girth through the opening, scraping the sides, head bobbing, a single tear now visible in the single eye. It erupts into the cubicle which is suddenly inhabited. There are two now there, the watcher and the watched. Like an arm, a fist, it has come through the wall and there it hangs—unreal.

Or surreal. The pictures of Magritte have captured the impossible sight. Warm, living flesh erupted from plywood, a near-mineral envelope—wood,

metal, pencil scribbblings—surrounding vibrant, rosy, beautiful and organic life itself.

The authenticity is overwhelming due in part to the partial nature of the object exposed. The man is not complete but the man is there, palpable, created in this instant now which has been continuing for many minutes. He nods his head like a Biblical sage—yes, I agree; come, all is forgiven; partake, and be whole.

The watching eyes finally close. Sight is now superseded and other senses take their turn. With open mouth the suppliant receives this anonymous host. He is invaded, pervaded, entered into and made one with.

The visitation continues and is concluded. The mouth of the suppliant is full but his heart is fuller. The deity, now less filled with dignity, withdraws and its owner rapidly becomes human again. The squatter slowly opens his eyes and swallows.

Love has come and gone. Wait, wait. You are mine now, do not depart. But such is the nature of eros—you look upon him and he disappears. Going, going, gone. The sound of a zipper zipped up, the bang of a door, and the visitation is over.



Slowly, the squatter finally stands, his legs cramped, his cigarette butts littering the floor about him. The hole, now at his own loin-level is simply that, a small opening made by some anonymous if good Samaritan a long time ago.

What he will do now depends upon the kind of person he thinks himself to be. He may add his own libation, or he may not. Having become *one* he may be content with that, holding his happiness or—at least his momentary content carefully (and metaphorically) before him as he leaves.

And he is fortunate. He has had a transcendental experience, on his own terms, which are the only terms possible. And the experience is rare enough (given the extraordinary confines, the sheer lack of probability, to which he subjects it) that it is felt. Self has been stilled for thirty minutes, an hour, and

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the world, society, cannot harm him as he steps for the time carefree from the cubicle.



This essay is intended as part of a longer work on the same subject. In writing it I have been indebted to a number of people for their ideas, all of which I have simply appropriated. I must mention, however, that behind the entire idea stand several of the writings of David Cole Gordon—the theory of unification, for example, is his.

The public toilet described in this essay is in the second basement of the pachinko pinball parlor in back of the Shinjuku branch of the Mitsukoshi Department Store in Tokyo. It continued to fulfill its role of particular as well as general public convenience for many years. No matter how often the management boarded up the hole, willing hands always reopened it. Finally, in the autumn of 1979, the management not only inserted a new (and hard plastic) wall between the cubicle, it also cut off the top section of both doors so that any casual passerby could see in. This therefore ended this toilet's particular career. The faithful have gone elsewhere.

“Gloriole” is from the Donald Richie Collection, Howard Gottlieb Archival Research Center at Boston University.

NOTE

¹ Ashmead, John Jr. “This Scorching Earth,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 12, No. 2 (February 1957): 324-325.

On Location: Pink Photography and the Possibilities of Representation

Michael Arnold

The theatrical soft-core pornographic film industry of Japan has been celebrated as one of the most unique commercial film production systems in the world. Formed in the early 1960s from the cottage industry of low-budget, adult oriented, and semi-independent film production companies that started to fill theater programming as mainstream film attendance declined, and identified in public discourse by journalist Murai Minoru in 1963,¹ Pink Films still flicker on the screens of Japan's darkest, dungiest movie theaters today. Within just a few years of the industry's christening, scores of production units released an output that at times overwhelmed the number of releases from the major studios. Until only recently, the industry was still capable of releasing hundreds of new titles a year.² This prolific film culture has always produced stories in a variety of genres, challenging the diversity and the dominance of mainstream domestic films—melodramatic period films, psychedelic horror stories, lighthearted comedies about the day to day life of businessmen in the capital, feverish tales of sadism and sexual power play, and even the kinds of politically or visually experimental offerings that tempt the desires of international film festivals.

Despite the industry's status as a crucial cog in the machinery of postwar Japanese moving image culture, Pink Films are often misidentified, hidden, or spoken of with an air of uncertainty. While paraded today as a fifty-year old bastion of studio-style filmmaking, as a training ground for generations of aspiring auteurs, and as one of the last ways to see 35mm film in the cinema, Pink movies are cheap and ephemeral. Often dismissed with derogatory nicknames like "eroductions" and "three million yen films," these movies continue to screen widely in 2013, in cinemas that are barely maintained by aging managerial staff and are poorly attended by meager, distracted male audiences. To those who are familiar with these spaces, Pink theaters are no-

torious for their status as *hattenba* (male cruising spots); cinemas where the audience does anything *but* watch the feature.³

Indeed, the Pink cinema facilitates a radical denial of the filmic text. It creates a reception environment where “viewing” is defined almost completely by disinterest and active non-spectatorship. The impotence of the screen’s address in these pornographic cinemas is understated in critical discussions, ignored in industry discourse, and erased from the (perhaps surprisingly common) self-reflexive representations of cinemas, spectatorship, and film production in Pink movies themselves. These unusual adult movies, so often defined by their essentially cinematic context and socially or politically controversial content, are generally ignored in their native exhibition spaces by the spectators who pay for a seat. Viewers instead use the darkness of the cinema as a cover to engage in social activities that can only be peripherally linked to the reductive, redundant, heteronormative narratives that play out on screen. Accounts of the Japanese Pink Film—both in Japan and overseas—minimize the complexities of these spaces, unable to articulate the contradictions of a cinematic reception culture that engenders a blatant dismissal of the cinematic object.

Despite a rapid decline in production, changes in content, and the slow crumbling of the Pink production infrastructure, the rhetoric of Pink’s consistency (or antiquity) as an industry and exhibition system has hardly evolved in the last three decades. It is difficult to find any kind of writing on Pink Film in English or Japanese that avoids the prerequisite, reductive list of material and industrial obstructions that characterize this soft-core adult film format—35mm photography and exhibition, post-production sound, low budget, fast shooting schedule, etc. Efforts to establish the historical importance and cultural location of Pink Film repeat the terms of its uniqueness, especially as a part of Japanese national cinema, and its adherence to certain idealized modes of film production and consumption.⁴ Pink is, we are assured, quite alien from the kind of pornography found today in the West, where celluloid porn film production and exhibition has all but disappeared, replaced by home video formats and shunned by audiences whose interest is defined as a purely private, direct, and personal (autoerotic, masturbatory) interaction with the moving image. In contrast, Pink miraculously remains in public view, on film, resilient to shifts in technology and demographics, elic-

ing a nostalgia for Golden Age movie conventions and linear theories of screen address and audience identification.

While the historical and industrial role of the Pink industry in Japanese film history is undeniable, prominent accounts of the Pink industry at least suffer from many inaccurate assumptions. At worst, they are ahistorical and misleading. Viewed against decades of international festival screenings, shrinking revenue, and overwhelming changes in movie technology, Pink Film's reputed specificity becomes a kind of product differentiation, supported both by domestic producers who are eager to carve out a niche identity for their films, and by foreign programmers and critics who are anxious to discover the next example of unusual or extreme "Asian" media. Today, the one-hour theatrical soft-core porn film has fallen under Japan's cultural domain, and Pink Film's façade of formal and textual specificity stands despite the fact that most of the industry's defining characteristics could easily have been used to describe adult film production in other national or industrial contexts as well. In an era of digital media, the romanticized notion of making porn films on celluloid within a limited and unchanging budget is one example of how Pink discourse has become fixated on limited material practices and national and cinematic cultural specificity; as Alex Zahnten puts it, an "image of petrified stability."⁵ Like many of the defining features of Pink, this image must be tempered. A fine line must be drawn between the discursive ideal and the cinematic actuality of Pink.

The need for further in-depth research on Pink presents a challenge to Film Studies. Attempts to accurately historicize the industry are thwarted by the ephemeral nature of printed resources on adult film and erotica and the complicated history of competition and collaboration between scores of fleeting film production units. While many books and magazines have been published about Pink and adult film in Japan, most are long out-of-print and extremely difficult to locate. Out of the thousands of Pink Films produced since the 1960s, only several hundred are available for viewing, whether at specialty theaters, on home video, or on streaming adult video websites like DMM.com. With the exception of work by internationally recognized and politically engaged auteurs like Wakamatsu Koji, prints of Pink Films made before the 1980s are very hard to find.⁶

It is perhaps no coincidence that Pink Film came to life in the early 1960s, after the exotic art films of Mizoguchi and Kurosawa had attracted

the attention of international viewers, when global distribution of North American, European, and Asian soft-core films had relaxed the limits of sexual representations in transnational contexts, and when discourses of the national and universal collided to create new cultural and generic boundaries of cinematic production. The ahistorical reputation of the Pink Film industry as unique and resilient in the face of demographic shifts and technological changes echoes the orientalist image of Japan in the postwar world; a nation of uncanny balance, where tradition and technology float against each other like oil and water.

The conventional definition of Pink Film contains one other significant but, again, very debatable distinction from the types of pornographic features that filled Western theaters until porn rapidly migrated to VCRs and TV screens in the 1980s. Pink movies include no explicit representations of sexual intercourse. To be more specific, and perhaps more importantly, they are almost never shot with genital contact occurring in profilmic space—a characteristic that, due to the challenges of production and the technological limits of film photography and editing, is often impossible to confirm visually in any adult moving image format. In Pink, cameras are angled to block clear views of actors' genitalia, and framings of nude bodies are visually handicapped. Full frontal nudity and pubic hair is usually avoided. Acts of intercourse are implied by showing moving bodies in close contact but without the “meat shot”, or explicit, close-up of image of genitalia and genital contact.

In 1989, film scholar Linda Williams provided what became the canonical definition of explicit representation in adult film, the meat shot—“a close-up of penetration that shows hard-core sexual activity is taking place.” She went on to emphasize that “most current feature-length pornos would not be complete without a great many meat shots in any given sex sequence.”⁷⁷ This has never been true for the Japanese Pink Film. (Although it is important to note that European and American adult film production in the 1960s also lacked this specific kind of shot. Hard-core adult cinema with full nudity and clear shots of genital penetration did not exist in commercial film when the Pink industry appeared.)

David Andrews, author of *Soft in the Middle: The Contemporary Softcore Feature in Its Contexts*, has highlighted the significance of the hard/soft-core distinction in adult media and its transformative potential for studies of film

and pornography. Soft-core genres, he argues, “are inexplicit forms situated in cultural and industrial ‘middles’ . . . because it is difficult to discuss soft-core without also analyzing its shifting relations to more *and* less explicit sectors, a focus on soft-core yields the kind of nuance most likely to demystify porn both in classrooms and in academic publications.”⁸ Andrews’ justification for work on this “middling” form of adult cinema carries a metaphorical resonance for Pink Film as well, as the Japanese format is also located in multiple in-between spaces—between public spectatorship and private consumption, national and international reception contexts, film to video and video to film transfer, and the constantly shifting relationships between the many other textual and contextual factors that define the limits of visibility and invisibility in the moving image.

While most contemporary definitions of Pink Film depend on extratextual or industrial details, the content—and in particular the visuality—of Pink Film is rarely treated in a systematic fashion. Perhaps it is ironic that Pink’s narrative and visual characteristics were addressed by pioneering Japanese film scholar Donald Richie in one of earliest English language essays on Japanese soft-core adult film.⁹ Reprinted here in the previous chapter, Richie’s article “Sex and Sexism in the Eroducton” was written in the early 1970s. Back then it would have been impossible to see a large number of Pink Films anywhere but in Japanese theaters (thus suggesting a significant amount of ethnographic research on Richie’s part). It was also a time when pornography in America and Europe was starting to shift the defining attribute of “hard-core” representation to footage of presumably real profilmic sex acts—in other words, a time when Pink’s meat-shot-less technique was, only by contrast, becoming a noteworthy characteristic. Richie noted in some detail the photographic limitations of the Japanese porno film industry:

The eroductions are the limpest of soft-core, and though there is much breast and buttock display, though there are simulations of intercourse, none of the working parts are ever shown. Indeed, one pubic hair breaks an unwritten but closely observed code. Though this last problem is solved by shaving the actresses, the larger remains: how to stimulate when the means are missing.¹⁰

Without once using the already ten-year-old term “Pink,” Richie outlines the characteristics of the eroduction (“a Japanese portmanteau-term coined



Figure 40: Popular 1980s-1990s AV actress Kobayashi Hitomi often found herself obscured by mosaic.

from ‘erotic production’¹¹) that to this day have not changed—very low budget, fast shooting schedule, one-hour running length, stereotypically gendered characters, and sexual violence. He then couples his brief observations on the films’ content with a speculative sociological analysis of Japanese film and society. Although he does not force the point, his article implies that the void left by the eroduction’s lack of hard-core visual detail is (over)compensated for by prerequisite scenes of violence by men against women. Richie anchors this equation in Japanese culture, constructing a binary between the eroduction’s tendency to avoid explicit representation of these “working parts” and American pornography’s tendency toward “showing all,” without qualifying or historicizing either.

Pink is still often identified by what it is *not*, and defined in contrast to (often negligible or non-existent) differences with the content of other nations’ pornographic film output. There is a long history of partial nudity and soft-core eroticism in global adult film production, and both the Japanese and U.S. pornographic film industries have only edged toward more explicit representations over the decades. In the 40 years since Richie’s article was

published, restrictions on Japanese films have relaxed to the point where “breast and buttock” can be very casually shown, and where even pubic hair may no longer be singled out as a reason for censorship. Nonetheless, in the vast majority of Pink productions since Richie’s article, actors do not have sexual intercourse before a rolling camera; they only pretend to do so. This is not an absolute. Some Pink Films—such as director Imaoka Shinji’s *Lunch Box* (*Tamamono*, 2004), starring adult video “queen” Hayashi Yumika—claim to include footage of profilmic intercourse even though the meat shot is not included on the film print. On the other hand, many hard-core adult videos (AV) feature simulated sex that only seems more real due to longer takes and the different flicker and frame rate of video images (or due to post-production pixelization that made it, like Pink Film, impossible to tell). Nonetheless, Richie’s little-interrogated attempt to *look* at the Pink Film—dated and biased as it is—suggests a valuable approach that has been abandoned even while critical interest in Japanese pornography has increased.

It is time to look closely at Pink Film itself, and in doing so not only ask how the Pink industry represents itself, or how global film discourse represents Japanese sex cinema, but also to do the dirty work on the sets, in the studios, and in the theaters; to ask how Pink is invested in problems of visibility, visibility, representation, and cinema. Many questions remain about Pink’s limited techniques of sexual representation and pornography’s perceived *obligation* to reveal all bodies fully for maximum erotic impact. Pink Film’s recent rediscovery by international film scholars presents a unique opportunity to revisit the ways that film theory represents the life and the death of a film industry so elusive it almost appears transparent.

Perhaps the most salient quality of Pink today is not in the idea that it is somehow essentially different, or that it played some industrial or cultural role that is unheard of in other cultural contexts, but simply that it truly *is* visible. American and European soft-core films of the 1960s, and even the hard-core productions of the 1970s and 1980s, have all but disappeared from movie theater screens around the world. In Japan, however, theatrical porn films may still be seen at the cinema. The programming, as I explained earlier, is limited—the vast majority of films screened today are titles that were produced after the video “revolution” of the 1980s; films that exhibit as much a commentary on different moving image and audio-visual representation technologies as they exhibit any kind of function as a discreet, unique,

or “pure” celluloid film tradition. But in 2013, there are still 50 adult film theaters operating in Japan. The most succinct explanation of the specificity of Pink Film may simply be that audiences *can still* see it in its native exhibition context, and thus attempt to know it.¹² That, however, presents another problem. It presumes that we can know what we see. It also assumes that the audience is actually looking.

As the rock anthem in Terayama Shuji’s anti-establishment manifesto *Throw Out Your Books, Go into the Streets* (*Sho o suteyo machi e deyo*, 1971) charged, “Pink Films—who are they for?” Even 40 years later, there is no clear answer. Are they for cinephiles in Japan? Maybe the few that pay attention, like the fans who attend opening day events to photograph their favorite actresses on stage at the Okura Theater in Ueno before blogging about the experience on the Internet. What about Pink casts and crews? Filmmakers always attend test screenings when a print is completed, but those are held at a comfortable screening room in the Toei laboratory just outside of downtown Tokyo. In nearly a decade of research, I have spoken with very few Pink Film professionals who would openly admit to visiting a Pink theater for an occasion other than a special event.

Foreign audiences watch Pink Films in the alien contexts of festival screenings or on private video screens, often indoctrinated into the pop-historical discourse that insists Japanese Pink movies are underground or anti-establishment works of grindhouse art. Domestic adult cinema audiences hardly watch the films at all, instead either sleeping in their seats or cruising for male-male sexual action with other audience members. Pink’s reputation as a unique and essentially cinematic pornography industry is undermined by a theatrical exhibition context that caters to regular audiences who are interested in anything but the films that are playing. Without paying very careful attention to how Pink films are made and received, how can we know what we are (not) seeing?

It is with these questions in mind that I embarked on an extended research project on the contemporary Pink Film in Japan. Attempting to blend production studies, historical research, and formal analysis, I searched for ways to understand Pink Film’s role as an industry, a historical discourse, and a mode of spectatorship. During the course of my studies, I spent months with staff and cast members as they prepared and filmed movies for Shinto-ho, Kokuei, Xces, and Okura Pictures, the four main distribution companies

ON LOCATION

active at the time. After long hours and many late nights talking to directors, screenwriters, actors, and producers, and facilitated by energetic exchanges that were likely inspired as much by my own misunderstanding of Pink Film as my acquaintances' difficulty in explaining it, I was eventually invited to observe and, to a limited extent, participate in the production of several films, from the writing and re-writing process, to filming, and post-production audio recording.

On the set of one of these films, I was introduced to an individual whose involvement captured my curiosity about representation in the Pink Film and put into focus the questions of soft-core photography and representation that framed my own attempts to understand Pink. That person is photographer Tsuda Ichiro. A veteran of Pink sets and studios since the 1970s, Tsuda is still a reliable and highly-regarded member of the small community of professional photographers who are called to Pink sets to shoot the still images of partly-nude actresses (and occasionally men) used for advertisement posters that hang at the entrances to adult specialty theaters. After meeting Tsuda on several occasions and observing him as he performed his duties on the set, I learned that over twenty years earlier he had published an enlightening book that documented in detail his photographic relationship with Pink Film. At a wrap party following the test screening for Okura Pictures' *A Fabulous One-sided Affair* (*Suteki na kataomoi*, a.k.a. *Baked Cheesecake*, dir. Moriyama Shigeo, 2005), Tsuda presented me with a copy of this remarkable work. It was not until much later, when I had gained a better awareness of Japanese adult film history and a clearer understanding of how the films were translated from set to screen, that I began to realize the value of Tsuda's insight into questions of pornography, obscenity, and visibility in Japanese Pink Film history.

Entitled *The Location* (*Za rokeshon*), Tsuda's book is a detailed, 229-page document about the cameraman's experiences with cast and crew on the sets of several Pink Films produced in the late 1970s. The text is structured around a number of anecdotal essays and reflections on Tsuda's encounters with a dozen different Pink personalities, and concludes with a section of excerpts from the censorship and obscenity regulations maintained by the quasi-independent Japanese film censorship board, Eirin (Eiga Rinri Kitei Kanri Inkaei, or the film Classification and Rating Committee). More importantly, *The Location* contains over 100 photographs from an early stage in

Tsuda's career as a Pink set photographer. Instead of his poster and production still work, or the kinds of eroticized, glossy books published under his name later in the decade, *The Location* focuses on Tsuda's personal, "fly on the wall" images of actors, directors, and staff on the set, and of the ephemera, surroundings, and situations common to the sites of Pink Film production.

The book arrived at a defining moment for the Pink industry. Video recording and viewing technology was spreading rapidly through professional and consumer channels in the late 1970s. September of 1981 saw the release of the *Daydream* (*Hakujitsumu*) remake, which was advertised as the first commercial Japanese hard-core (*bonban*) porn film, directed by the same Takechi Tetsuji who released the soft-core, Pink Film version of *Daydream* in 1964 and the lawsuit-inspiring *Black Snow* (*Kuroi yuki*) in 1965. The first commercial adult video tapes also appeared on the Japanese market in May of that year, with releases like *Woman from the Porno Magazine: Peeping at Secrets* (*Binibon no onna: bio nozokū*) and *White Paper on the Secretary's Slit: Ripe Secret Garden* (*OL wareme bakusho: jukushita bien*).¹³ Amidst the rapid formation of adult video production companies that year, Nikkatsu Studios, still trying to stave off bankruptcy with their high-budget line of Roman Porno films, also began shooting on video for their *Live Shoot* (*Namadori*) adult series. Ex-Pink director Yoyogi Chu (a.k.a. Yoyogi Tadashi) inaugurated his highly popular *Document: The Masturbation* (*Dokumento za onani*) video series in 1982. At the same time, a number of prominent 1960s and 1970s Pink directors graduated to more mainstream filmmaking projects. Wakamatsu Koji, whose sex films defined the independence and the independence and political charge of Japanese adult film for a generation, released his final (non-Pink) adult feature *A Pool Without Water* (*Mizu no nai puru*) in 1982 before shifting to mainstream and major studio filmmaking.

In the years that followed, Pink filmmakers experimented widely with video. Pink theaters began screening film transfers of video-shot material (typically called *kineko* productions, from the Japanese word for kinescope),¹⁴ and Pink narratives often became as much fantasies about inter-(or intra-)media flirtation and reproduction as they were stories of men and women copulating. Despite claims of Pink's absolute and unwavering attachment to 35mm celluloid photography and distribution, by the 1980s Pink was consciously and consistently engaging with new video formats. The challenges presented by home video markets, video camera technology, and the

“live” documentary aesthetics of AV contributed strongly to a discursive restructuring of what “Pink Film” meant to domestic producers and audiences.

The increasingly inward-looking discourse of Pink Film history also found new venues for expression and exploration in the 1980s. A network of Pink specialty theaters had started to solidify around the late 1970s,¹⁵ providing more opportunities to see Pink-only programs that excised the major studio adult films and censored Western “Pink Films” (like *Deep Throat* [1972] or *Pussy Talk* [1975]) that were common in adult theaters to that point. The first *Zoom-Up* adult film festival—forerunner to the yearly Pink Taisho industry awards ceremony—was held in March 1980. Director Yamamoto Shinya published books about his experiences in adult film, like *A Porno Director's Battles* (*Poruno kantoku funsenki*, 1978) and *I Am A Molester* (*Watasbi wa chikan*, 1979). These were followed by a number of other seminal publications on Pink Film history, including Suzuki Yoshiaki's *Pink Film Water Margin* (1983), Wakamatsu Koji's *I Get My Hands Dirty* (1982), Murai Minoru's *Nude Dream Chronicle* (1989), and actor and director Nogami Masayoshi's *Requiem: Where Will Pink Film Go?* (1985).

These works took care to note the rapidly transforming landscape of Pink Film production. In an article reproduced from an October 1983 issue of *Jabu* magazine, Nogami lamented the imminent changes facing the industry: “The romance of nude films is going to disappear . . . Just as the five majors started to go bankrupt one after another with the appearance of television, the recent video boom is swiftly reducing attendance numbers for Pink Films.”¹⁶ After two decades of independent productions, subcontracted studio films, and cinema programs that blended Pink with American and European porn and Nikkatsu's studio-financed Roman Pornos, industry and insider publications in the 1980s started to discursively isolate Pink Film as a unique kind of adult cinema.

Among these works, Tsuda's photographic narrative of the Pink set deserves particular attention. *The Location* was a groundbreaking visual historical document of the Pink Film industry. Published first in May of 1980, by September 1984 the book was already in its ninth printing. A fictionalized version of Tsuda's photographic adventures was also released as a major motion picture by Shochiku Studios in 1984. Entitled simply *Location* (*Rokeshon*), the film version is a story about the tragi-comedic adventures of troubled filmmakers on a Pink Film set. It was directed by regular Yamada Yoji collabora-



Figure 41: Title frame of *Location*, the feature film version of Tsuda's book.

tor Morisaki Azuma and starred Nishida Toshiyuki (a very well-known actor who became famous for his enduring role in Shochiku Studios' *Free and Easy* series [*Tsuri baka nissbi*, 1988-2009], about an office worker who was obsessed with fishing). The bittersweet narrative of the film, however, held little resemblance to the documentary and anecdotal approach of Tsuda's book.

In 1980, Tsuda was not a casual cameraman who had stumbled into the film world, but was in fact a recognized photographic artist. By the time of *The Location's* original release, he had already headlined three private exhibits at the Nikon Salon gallery in Tokyo, the third of which contained the source material for the images in this book. Tsuda continued his activities as a freelance and art photographer throughout the 1980s and after, and in 1989 was awarded the eighth Domon Ken Award for his book of black and white snapshot photographs, *The Narrow Road* (*Oku no hosomichi*, named after the classic poetry collection by Matsuo Basho). Later appointed as president of the Japan Photographer's Association, he is still working today and continues to shoot publicity stills for Pink Films and hard-core adult videos.

The Location marks a focal point between significantly different representational registers in the already complex "middles" of soft-core adult filmmaking in Japan: the first person anecdotal text, the documentary photograph, and the fictional Pink Film. Tsuda's text and images provide more than most "first-hand" accounts of the period though; they present a rare,

photographically-documented historiographical discourse on Pink Film and its modes of representation. In its attempt to articulate the ambiguity and problematic obscenity of photographic representation in Pink Film, *The Location* approaches an ontology of pornography. Aside from the book's ethnographic and historical value as a detailed document on Pink filmmaking, Tsuda's pictures suggest a dialogue between the competing porno-realisms of the fictional moving picture, the documentary-style adult video, and the documentary still photograph at perhaps the last moment in Pink Film history before the effects of video production and distribution both diluted and purified the cinematic nature of the industry, redefining Pink as the clearly identifiable product that it is today.¹⁷

Tsuda's reception of the Domon Ken Award is a clear indication of the photographic mode he grew from. Domon Ken (1909-1990) was a pioneering Japanese photographer who emphasized the idea of objective photographic reality through his concept of the "absolutely unstaged snapshot." The prize awarded in Domon's name since 1982 is a highly-respected recognition of excellence in contemporary Japanese photography. Although Domon worked in several different styles during his career with a variety of formats,¹⁸ he is perhaps best known for his theories of realism in photography that were inspired by the work of Henri Cartier-Bresson and the concept of the "decisive moment" (articulated by Domon as *ketteiteki shunkan*). Cartier-Bresson's snapshots are powerful because of their unique combination of realist and formalist elements, by seemingly freezing moments of action in an unmoving frame, but Domon assimilated the French photographer's phrase on his own terms to emphasize the absolute existence of a pro-filmic referent. For Domon, the *ketteiteki shunkan* depended on an experienced and careful gaze that could discern between the staged and the real.

In essence, Realism in photography is a basic method of snapshot photography, the primary requisite of which is that it be "absolutely unstaged." Unlike the snapshot—again, a term that has come to be used in reference to a specialized "genre"—realist photography encompasses landscapes, people, still photography: any theme that can be engaged via this approach. If there is even the slightest hint of pose, artificiality, or performance in the photograph—no matter how well it is composed, or how demonstrative it may be—with time and

with repeated viewing, it will not hold up. The very foundation of such a photograph is weak: it will fail to maintain interest. It is only when there is not even the vaguest taint of falseness in the photograph that it may rightly be termed “absolutely unstaged.” Even a photograph that is at first captivating and seems a wonderful masterpiece will, if it has any element of artificiality, eventually lose its impact as one continues to look at it, because there is a defilement that worked its way into the image at the very moment the shutter was released.¹⁹

The Location clearly foreshadows Tsuda’s alignment with this school of photographic realism. Consisting mainly of shots of Pink Film sets and the individuals who sustained them, Tsuda’s collection captures spontaneous episodes from moments before, during, and after the movie camera was rolling. On the top of page 23, actress Nakahara Miyuki lays on a tatami mat in a small room, with an unnamed co-star fanning himself beside her. Next to them, in the upper right of the frame, a focus puller measures the distance from the bed to the camera lens as a gaffer positions a lamp in the room. The composition captures both the apparatus of filmmaking and the cramped reality of the Pink set. It was shot in the momentary, in-between space of transition between one take and the next—framing the labor of film production that is typically hidden between the sutured, contiguous takes of a finished print—with the blurred shape of the actor’s fan marking the temporal span of Tsuda’s shutter. This semi-narrative approach envisions the space of the Pink set from the mediating eye of an invisible camera that travels uninterrupted between moments of filmed performances and the down time of the unrehearsed “scenes” that play out between takes.

In a small photograph on page 68 from the filming of a story featuring an “invisible man”—even today a popular genre in soft- and hard-core Japanese pornography—an actress sits alone, facing a mirror on a low wall separating the two gendered sections of a public bath. On top of the left side of the wall rest the lamps that are illuminating the scene. On the upper right side of frame, sitting on the wall directly above the actress, a staff member is starting to pour a bucket of water on her head. Tsuda’s photograph freezes the decisive moment of the water falling out of the bucket, just as it starts to splash against the actress’s back.



Figure 42: Pink production culture in *Location*.

Pages 57, 59, and 65 show pictures of actresses in a different kind of decisive moment; during the act of sexual intercourse before the movie camera. In the full-page image on page 57, the frame is half-obscured by a dark barrier, as if taken in hiding while peeping on the protagonists of the shot. Other photographs show the cast and staff preparing for a scene with cameras, lights, and scripts (pages 11, 18-19, 26, 28-29, 35, 69, 75, 77, 113), actors rehearsing their love scenes or relaxing after a take (pages 69, 99, 161), or the cluttered *mise-en-scène* of theaters, shooting locations, and facilities used during production (pages 20-21, 50-53, 71, 73, 79, 81, 105). All of the photos include captions to identify the location or name the significant cast and crew members within the frame. Several of the book's pages are also devoted to large photographs of actresses in various stages of physical undress or narrative distress, posing in eroticized gestures for Tsuda's Nikon as they would for the gaze of the movie camera (pages 45, 47, 83, 123, 127, 133).²⁰ Examples of all these types of images may be found in the collection of Tsuda's work included in *The Pink Book*.

As a series of images with a loose narrative trajectory, Tsuda's stills create an alluring visual story about the Pink filmmaking process itself. Tsuda's point of view roams around the sets and locations freely, highlighting angles and moments that escaped the more fixed nature of the moving picture camera. Occasionally Tsuda's camera interrupts unstaged moments with posed images of nude female bodies in carnal ecstasy that echo the prerequisite

style of fictional Pink eroticism, but in balancing the still image with the moving pornographic performance, *The Location* locates a documentary perspective in the profilmic reality of the real/imaginary space behind the screen, where men and women *perform* gendered desire and filmmakers assemble strips of film into commercial fantasies. The paradox of this approach is that both visual realms—the fictional space of the Pink Film (which, with a minority of posed nude photographs and none of the evidence of the moving picture itself, is only hinted at in the book) and the ethnographic space of Tsuda’s report—are mediated primarily through the annotated still picture. Tsuda’s history reduces the narrative imagination of pornographic moving images to the documentary “realities” of the still photograph.

Two sections at the core of the book are particularly revealing. At the beginning of chapter three, Tsuda describes his understanding of realist filmmaking with a long commentary about Pink director Seki Koji. Seki was a director and producer of documentary and educational films before shifting to Pink production in the 1960s. In Tsuda’s account, Seki’s work caused a stir when his documentary film *The White Mountain Range* (a.k.a. *The Roof of Japan* [*Shiroi sanmyaku*], 1957), which earned an endorsement from the Japanese Ministry of Education and was nominated at the 10th Cannes Film Festival, was criticized for allegedly filming animals in artificial or studio conditions instead of outdoors in the mountains that the documentary claimed to report on. Tsuda explains that the accusations of deception in this Ministry of Education documentary caused an uproar.²¹ This prompts the photographer to remark that the question of lies and reality in film is a fundamental issue for filmmaking. At this point he reiterates his own deep interest in the topic of realist representation.²²

Tsuda then begins to articulate his theories of realism by dividing the “truth” of photography into three levels: a larger truth, a middle truth, and smaller truths.

There are infinite truths (*jjitsu*). Everything that exists in the world is true. Truth rolls around in everything. Or rather, we all live within truth. Within that greater truth (*dai jjitsu*), all the cameraman is able to capture is a middle truth, which is in itself an arrangement of various smaller truths. Given this, since it is impossible for us to create a single reality (*genjitsu*),

our method must always be to layer small and middle truths up together in an attempt to approach a greater truth. This explanation gets a bit complicated, but even if we layer small and middle truths infinitely, we can never arrive at a large truth. It's easy to imagine how two works based entirely on the same truths might arrive at completely opposite conclusions.

Filming things that occur entirely in reality (*genjitsu*), or filming things that are all completely man-made—which is the larger truth, the “reality”? This is obviously a philosophical problem so big it makes the mind spin. If you think about things like this too much, you get exhausted and become grim, so I make a point of not trying to think too deeply about it. Do whichever the hell you want. That is my position in a nutshell.²³

Perhaps unusual for a photographer associated with the Domon Ken school of realist photography, Tsuda rests his statement on a very skeptical position. However, Tsuda's uncertainty is not a retreat; instead, it emphasizes the indeterminate representational location of Pink images at a time when the industry struggled to discursively reinvent itself against the different pornographic realism of video. Instead of settling the rich questions of representation bulging at the seams of *The Location*, Tsuda hovers carefully around the main “philosophical problem” that his profession (and Pink Film representation) depended on.

Tsuda concludes his theoretical intervention with a rhetorical ellipsis. In a book about an industry that creates indeterminate, soft-core representations of sexual activity, his ambiguity is telling. While invoking a discourse of photographic realism, he avoids identifying a “real” photographic referent, instead focusing on the *mediating* function of the photographer between different layers of reality. Indeed, Tsuda's account focuses more on the discourse of realism as a network of mediating levels than any kind of direct link to the aura of *life* through a representational art.

As Walter Benjamin and others have theorized, in mechanically reproducible media such as photographs or digital images, illustrated journals or magazines, and especially moving pictures, multiple layers of mediation and

the potential for unlimited reproduction may be seen to reduce the immediacy and liveliness of an original image. We might see a reflection of this in Tsuda's discussion of different layers of truth being "piled up." (This also foregrounds the kinds of multi-format experimentation—*kineko* films, video and 8mm shots, etc.—that Pink narratives began to employ regularly in the 1980s.)

The pornographic image compensates for the loss of aura by reproducing a specific kind of visual content that, through an elaborate, culturally and technologically-motivated discourse, obliges viewers' naïve faith in the reality of profilmic time and space. Unlike the explicit hard-core photography of American and European adult cinema, Japan's censored forms of pornography in the 1980s lured viewers away from the distance imposed by the medium and created a portal through which to "see" the picture in a different visual mode. They focused not on the (presumably) verifiable photographic object, but on the implied visual gaps within the frame—the obscured spaces supposedly occupied by the penis, the vagina, the anus—the in-between spaces that were carefully constructed by photographic technique, sutured by the cinematic apparatus itself, and endorsed by industrial and legal standards. Adult film in Japan located the realism and the obscenity of the pornographic image on the event horizon of its mediation, rather than in the indexicality of the "pure" image itself. It embraced the suspense and excitement bound to the uncertainty. As Roland Barthes once wrote, "I passed beyond the unreality of the thing represented, I entered crazily into the spectacle, into the image, taking into my arms what is dead, what is going to die . . ." ²⁴

Postwar French film theorist André Bazin explained the uncanny power of still and moving photographs in relation to their capability to capture or freeze life, mummifying it into a permanent but accessible stasis. In one recently translated essay, he considers the ways the ontological properties of photography place film representation on a thin boundary that balances between the animate and the dead.

Death is nothing but one moment after another, but it is the last. Doubtless no moment is like any other, but they can nevertheless be similar as leaves on a tree, which is why their cinematic repetition is more paradoxical in theory than in practice. Despite the ontological contradiction it represents, we quite readily accept it as a sort of objective counterpart to

memory. However, two moments in life radically rebel against this concession made by the consciousness: the sexual act and death. Each is in its own way the absolute negation of objective time, the qualitative instant in its purest form. Like death, love must be experienced and cannot be represented (it is not called the little death for nothing) without violating its nature. This violation is called obscenity. The representation of a real death is also an obscenity, no longer a moral one, as in love, but metaphysical. We do not die twice. In this respect, a photograph does not have the power of film; it can only represent someone dying or a corpse, not the elusive passage from one state to another.²⁵

Bazin's colorful description of obscenity is perhaps too geographically and historically distant from the Pink Film to be directly applicable, but what might "death" mean for the Pink Film? While Japanese adult film narratives of the 1980s only rarely dealt with characters' deaths, the death of the industry itself was looming on the horizon with the industrial and material threat of popular video formats and their claims to a more direct form of photographic realism. This promise of death has become a protracted illness, one that continues to haunt the Pink Film industry as digital movie photography and exhibition sneaks into the spaces occupied by today's actively distracted spectators.

We must make a distinction here. In the early 1980s, the Pink Film started to reposition itself against the formal characteristics that became associated with the early adult video industry—an industry that, inflected by releases such as Yoyogi's *Document* series, had aligned itself with a different kind of realist approach, where an audio-visual narrative was no longer enough to truly (re)present acts of sex. Video pornography presumed to show the details of sexual activity in a more direct way, by recording longer takes, using mobile cameras, and placing the point of genital contact in the center of the frame where it could be seen. With the exception of illegal "underground" tapes and uncensored made-for-export videos however, profilmic sexual contact was still never represented in the video image. It was deliberately censored from the image with optical effects known as *bokashi* (practical blurring of the lens) and *mozaike* (post-production optical pixilation). Unlike Pink Film, adult video dared to capture the meat shot, but could not show it, in-



Figure 43: Tsuda-photographed poster for *Dirty Sisters: Raw Flesh Flirting* (*Midara shimai: Namabada ijiri*, 2000), a film by veteran director Fukamachi Akira.

stead turning the porn's visual evidence into a blur of moving shapes and colors that were overexposed, deliberately left out-of-focus, or abstracted into flickering squares.

Pink Film does not address the “obscenity” of the act of love in the same way as the hard-core porn film or the “live” adult video, which carefully construct the classical meat shot throughout sex scenes but obscure the central details of that image. Following Bazin, in Japanese adult video, the image draws attention to the representation not only of profilmic sex, but of the essentially unrepresentable character of such an act. The impossibility of capturing that decisive act—the real act of profilmic sexual contact—is highlighted and even parodied by AV censorship and the (legal) impossibility of explicit sexual representation in Japanese media. The viewer's attention is drawn exactly to the one thing the eye cannot see.

In Pink Film, this point is blocked by other parts of profilmic bodies, clothes, or props, or left outside the frame entirely. In AV, the genitals are placed center-frame but reduced to a smudge, or an assortment of flickering, abstract squares that lay not in profilmic space, but on the two-dimensional plane of the screen. As Slavoj Žižek wrote of the “blot” in the work of Alfred Hitchcock, it is the “detail that ‘does not belong,’ that sticks out, is ‘out of place,’ does not make any sense within the frame of the idyllic scene” and the moment when “we enter the realm of double meaning, everything seems to contain some hidden meaning that is to be interpreted by the Hitchcockian hero, ‘the man who knows too much.’ The horror is thus internalized, it reposes on the *gaze* of him who ‘knows too much.’”²⁶

Japanese censorship of the meat shot is nearly a literal interpretation of this “‘pure’ signifier without signified.” Adult video presented this representational quandary in the form of abstract optical censorship. Pink Film, as we know, does not necessarily appropriate the same visual limits or technological effects as AV. Pink Film does have an equivalent kind of “blot” however, and it is one that Tsuda discusses at length.

Tsuda located this signifier outside of the frame in the profilmic space of the Pink set. In a section entitled “Thoughts on *Maebari/Chinbari*” (“*Maebari/Chinbari ko*”), the photographer embarks on an extended analysis of *maebari*, a term that refers to a kind of “front cover” or bandage that is commonly worn by Pink actors while (otherwise) performing nude in a sex scene. Less



Figure 44: A reacharound obscured by *bokashi* in *Next* (dir. Ikejima Yutaka, 2008).

necessary in the earliest years of Pink, when camera angles were more conservative (and budgets were slightly higher, making retakes more possible), the *maebari* became a standard of Pink Film sets in the late 1970s and remains so today. As essentially nothing between the legs is allowed to be filmed on the Pink set, participants must take care not to let any obscene detail slip into the camera's view. To prevent any mistakes (which would necessitate wasteful cuts or the time-consuming post-production censorship better suited to adult video) actors and actresses generally apply these makeshift coverings of gauze and beige tape to their genitals. *Maebari* are taped onto the crotch before a sex scene and discarded at the end of the shoot.

On pages 85-95, Tsuda includes ten images showing the application of *maebari* and the ways they look during and after use. In the caption under the photograph on the top of page 94, which shows one covering lying on the ground between two naked feet, Tsuda identifies “A used *maebari*. It’s bizarre to see it like this; you start to feel that the *maebari* has its own soul [*kokoro*].”²⁷ While “soul” may be something of a comedic exaggeration, Tsuda’s account allows us to see this piece of Pink filmmaking ephemera as revealing a privileged ontological trace between representations and the physical and temporal specificity of their subjects. The aura of explicit filmmaking in this case is not captured on film; it is a tangible, physical object that is left unfiled and ultimately discarded as trash behind the scenes.

At the outset of the section, Tsuda explains how, at one point in his life, he became a collector of such leftover *maebari*.²⁸ While he emphasizes that his collecting does not indicate a perverted sexual obsession, the idea of actresses just tossing the shields of tape and gauze that protected their “important parts” into a dirty ashtray (often with pieces of pubic hair clinging to their edges) was just too much for him to bear. Tsuda claims that, at the time of writing *The Location*, word of his odd habit had spread so far that actresses would willingly autograph their used *maebari* and present them to the photographer as a gift. The trace of this fetishized object to a living being was reiterated through both a written signature and the physical (visual) *maebari* itself. Yet this trace was completely left out of the Pink text, reimagined on film only by Tsuda’s extra-textual research.

This fixation on the material ephemera of adult film production is in extreme contrast to the realism of hard-core video pornography and even the “realism” of the field of Porn Studies, where the image, even in a mutated or abstracted form, is celebrated as sufficient proof of at least cinematic, and at best profilmic, reality. *The Location* allows us to see that this is not an absolute difference however. While the specificities of Pink’s *maebari* and blurring and AV’s mosaic illustrate central material contrasts between film and video pornography, they also demonstrate an important dialogue between both formats’ investment in the real. The *maebari* is a kind of profilmic mosaic, one that rests not on the viewers’ two-dimensional screens but on real performers’ bodies. It is something that can only be seen, touched, or addressed outside of the moving image. Japanese AV, with its insistence on eroticizing the concealed trace to an indexical referent, replaces profilmic realism with screen realism. But the blot of this self-censorship cannot be taken as an indication of experience or history; it is only the visual excess (re)produced by competing levels of mediation struggling for dominance in-between the contested images of a transforming film industry.

Tsuda’s ambiguous approach to photographic realism and attention to the material leftovers of adult film production oblige a reconsideration of the indexical properties of the photograph, and point toward a fuller awareness of visual meaning in adult film production, both in front of and behind the camera. It is not enough to believe what we see, or even simply to “see.” The viewing subject must be aware of what happens outside the frame, on

the set, and on the performers' bodies, in order to understand the relationship between image and non-image.

The blots and bandages in Japanese pornography still exist, struggling to conceal their (lack of a) trace to something before, after, or outside the frame. In the simplest sense, they are indicators of the legal limits of sexual representation. Still, it would be too much to say that the eroticism of Pink Film is limited by its unfilmed, invisible meat shots. Certainly the economic and technical limitations of soft-core pornography, as fluid as they may be, necessitate a kind of self-restriction that is not required in porn based on different technologies and distribution models. If anything, the *maebari* is a gesture toward the "larger truth" of pornography as social space and lived history; a kind of bookmark reminder that the material and industrial realities of porn can never be captured in the image alone.

An absence of images of genitalia or pubic hair does not necessarily make a representation any more or less pornographic or obscene. In America or Japan, obscenity is a term defined in tandem with legal precedent, industrial self-regulation policies, and public response. It has never been as easy as Justice Potter Stewart's superficially straightforward statement (in which he was discussing a film that did *not* show the mysterious qualities that he needed to see). Likewise, the Pink Film encourages us only to imagine what we *don't* see; and what we *do* see—a vortex of fake sex and (un)representation, held together with loose and usually banal narratives that often mystify and eroticize the operations of the apparatus—quickly evaporates. It is in the spaces in between technologies and representational registers that we may locate a certain specificity in Pink Film studies; not in elements that are included or excluded from the image, not in the culturally or industrially-specific boundaries of budgets and facilities, but in the ways that Pink history and industry constantly draw attention to the tensions and negotiations that arise between competing industrial standards, technologies, and media.

The possibilities for theoretical and visual analysis of the Pink Film's limitations of photographic representation have yet to be explored in detail. The question of Pink Film is one of pornography. That is to say, it is a question of representation; cinematic representation and the representation of cinema. If the crumbling walls, mangled seats, and cruising customers of Pink theaters have anything to tell us, it is that Pink Film's gaze—that *film's* gaze—has never been as secure as we imagine. In popular and scholarly imagination,

Pink is a cinematic mummification of film history, national representation, and heteronormative sexual fantasy. In image, it becomes the myth of cinema itself.

NOTES

- ¹ Murai, *Hadaka no yume nendaiki*, 17-20. Murai coined the term (at the time with the honorific prefix as *O-pinku eiga*) in an October 1963 *Naigai taimuzu* article on the production of Seki Koji's *Cave of Lust* (*Joyoku no dokutsu*), the sequel in a series of "female tarzan" films. The first Pink Film is considered to be Kobayashi Satoru's *Market of Flesh* (*Nikutai ichiba*), which predated Murai's term by over a year. See also Suzuki, *Pinku eiga suikoden*, 34-39.
- ² Newspapers reported on the boom in the Pink Film industry in the late 1960s. An *Asahi shinbun* article from December, 1968 claims that Pink Films released that year were expected to outnumber films by the five major studios. The article cites Eirin figures from late November that counted 415 total films rated, 187 of those having been produced by the majors. While the remaining 228 included independent productions like Hani Susumu's *The Inferno of First Love* (*Hatsukoi: Jigokuben*, 1968) or Imamura Shohei's *Profound Desire of the Gods* (*Kamigami no fukaki yokubo*, 1968) the author assumes that "more than 90%" of the non-major studio releases in Eirin's figures are "eroduction" films. (*Asahi shinbun*, "Go sha.") A *Yomiuri shinbun* article from the following year reported a slightly different total for 1968, but cited National Police Agency figures that counted 244 independent "adult-oriented" (*seijin muke*) films released, versus 218 films from the major studios (21 of those adult), and 259 foreign or occidental films (of which 15 were rated for adults). (*Yomiuri shinbun*, "Pinku hanran mo yurusenai.") Alex Zahlten cites a figure from *Kinema junpo* that claims Pink Films made up 44% of feature production in 1965. Zahlten, "The Role of Genre in film from Japan," 73.
- ³ Accounts of the "alternative" uses of Pink theater spaces are difficult to locate in Japanese publications, but one brief mention can be found in the last section of Kato Mikiro's *A Cultural History of Movie Theaters and Spectators* (*Eigakan to kankeyaku no bunkashi*). Samuel R. Delany describes a similar atmosphere of spectatorial disengagement in now defunct New York adult theaters in his book *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*.

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- ⁴ The power of this discourse is hard to escape, even for independent and academic researchers with intimate knowledge of the industry. See for example Sharp's *Behind the Pink Curtain*—the first significant, book-length, English-language study of adult cinema in Japan—and Domenig's "Vital Flesh."
- ⁵ Zahlten, "The Role of Genre in film from Japan," 77. Zahlten traces the three million yen figure to an account by Producer Motogi Sojiro. *Ibid.*, 118. One version of that account can be found in Suzuki, *Pinku eiga suikoden*, 18.
- ⁶ During the course of my research, except for a few rare retrospective screenings at art and repertory theaters, the earliest films I saw screened were from the mid-1980s. Faced with the challenges of finding pre-1980 Pink Film prints in the cinema, I approached Saito Ayako of Meiji Gakuin University and staff at The National Film Center in Tokyo for help. The NFC has a large collection of Pink prints that stretches back to the earliest years of the industry, but many of those prints are reportedly unscreenable. In the summer of 2010, Alex Zahlten and I conducted several rounds of negotiations while trying to plan an academic screening of canonical Pink Films in the Film Center's screening room. We requested to see the remaining portion of Kobayashi Satoru's *Market of Flesh* and Seki Koji's 3D Pink Film *Pervert Demon (Hentaima, 1967)*. These requests, and more than a dozen others, were rejected on the basis that the prints were too damaged to be projected safely. Ultimately we were allowed to watch six ShintoHo titles, the earliest from 1985.
- ⁷ Williams, *Hard-core*, 72.
- ⁸ Andrews, "What Soft-core Can Do for Porn Studies," 51.
- ⁹ One earlier English language account can be found in a 1965 article in *Time*. Only three years after the appearance of the industry, an anonymous reporter describes the scene of a film shoot and informs readers of the successes of the low-budget, quickly-made "eroductions" in Japan. "And though it seemed like nothing more than a feature-length, slightly bowdlerized stag movie, such eroductions are turning out to be the Japanese film industry's most effective weapon in its death struggle with television." "The Rising Sun is Blue," 93.
- ¹⁰ Richie, "The Japanese Eroduction," 323-333 in this volume.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 12. Garland Cannon also identified "eroduction" as one of many Japanese language terms imported into the English language after World War II. Cannon cites inclusion of the term in the 1969 edition of the unabridged *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*. Cannon, "Recent Japanese Borrowings Into English," 376.

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- ¹² In the Supreme Court case *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, Justice Potter Stewart famously exhibited a kind of (extra-)sensory perception for pornography that helped him declare that Louis Malle's 1958 film *The Lovers* (*Les Amants*) was in fact not obscene. "I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description, and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it, and the motion picture involved in this case is not that." Quoted in Gerwitz, "On 'I Know It When I See It,'" 1024.
- ¹³ Fujiki, *Adaruto bideo kakumeishi*, 16.
- ¹⁴ So-called *kineko* films were not necessarily literal kinescope transfers. Most were transferred from video to film via telecine. However both technologies existed in Pink production from the 1980s. I address that distinction and its implications for the Pink Film industry's experiments in remediation in more detail in my dissertation.
- ¹⁵ See Zahlten (especially pp. 183-188) for historical data about the development of Pink specialty theaters. While Pink specialty theaters have existed since the 1960s, their numbers increased in the late 1970s and early 1980s after major studio attempts to emulate Pink's success with their own soft-core films failed. After the 1980s, mixed bills of Pink, non-Pink, and foreign adult films became increasingly scarce. In 2013, most of the remaining specialty Pink theaters operate with triple-features that change every week or ten days, and only show Pink Films from the last remaining distribution companies; Shintohe, Okura Pictures (OP), and Shin Nihon Eizo (a.k.a. Xces—the one active distributor with links to Nikkatsu). Some cinemas, like the Cine Roman Ikebukuro, may program one "classic" Nikkatsu Roman Porno with two OP or Xces Pink Films on the same bill. Aside from the occasional Roman Porno screening however, the programs are heavily weighted toward recent films. As I noted earlier, screenings of 1980s films are rare; screenings of pre-1980s films are today almost unheard of.
- ¹⁶ Nogami, *Chinkonka*, 18. It is interesting that in this quote Nogami does not relate the spread of television to Pink Film, despite the fact that the explosion of adult-oriented filmmaking was in part an economic strategy designed to combat that drop in attendance numbers by luring audiences out of their homes and back into the theaters. The life cycle of the Pink Film industry is, not surprisingly, bookended by TV and video.

¹⁷ I should emphasize that I do not wish to conflate the important material and aesthetic differences between these codependent but very different visual realms. Movie frames do not move in themselves, and still photographs capture not an abstract, atemporal ‘moment’ but a span of time measured in light. By no means do I consider Tsuda’s still pictures equivalent to the images projected on Pink cinema screens. Likewise, behind-the-scenes snapshots are not promotional poster images, nor are they frame enlargements from a reel of film. Nevertheless, as a step towards returning to a visual analysis of the Pink Film and its discursive formulations in Japan and elsewhere, I wish to place these photographs within a greater context of adult moving picture media and historiography. Just as Pink Films rely on the suggestion of a social, material, or sexual reality behind the screen and under the sheets, Tsuda’s documentary images depend on creating a productive binary between themselves and the fictional world they presume to explore.

¹⁸ Putzar, “The Reality of Domon Ken,” 308.

¹⁹ Domon, “Photographic Realism and the Salon Picture,” 23.

²⁰ Between the publication of *The Location* in 1980 and Tsuda’s receipt of the Domon Ken award in 1989, the photographer also published several books of still photographs that fit perhaps more firmly in the tradition of nude magazines; staged erotic photos, without any of the documentary elements or theoretical musings of *The Location*. I deal with those works in more depth in the full-length version of this piece.

²¹ Tsuda, *Za rokeshon*, 98.

²² Tsuda’s account itself may suffer from some historical inaccuracies. Tsuda identifies *The White Mountain Range* as being directed by Seki. However most reputable sources credit the film to director Imamura Sadao. Seki and Imamura worked together at Radio film (Rajio Eiga), a production company they co-founded in 1947 that specialized in animal documentary films. Seki’s exact involvement in *The White Mountain Range*, if any, is unclear.

²³ *Ibid.*, 100.

²⁴ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 116-117.

²⁵ Bazin, “Death Every Afternoon,” 30.

²⁶ Zizek, *Looking Awry*, 88.

²⁷ Tsuda, *Za rokeshon*, 94.

²⁸ Ibid., 85.

Pink Film and Porn Studies

Peter Alilunas

In his introduction to this much-needed collection, Abé Mark Nornes asks: “Why a book on Pink Film today?” Nornes answers with seven sites of analysis: basic, necessary histories; economies of scale; the industry as a training ground; cinematic experimentation; political appropriation; representations of sexuality; and film censorship. In the chapters that follow, these sites are carefully and thoughtfully explored through a variety of arguments and case studies, but what remains unspoken throughout are the ways in which all of these transcend Pink Film and apply more generally to the study of all adult film. Indeed, Nornes’ question—why a book on Pink Film today?—could equally be applied to nearly any other topic, in any place or time, regarding adult film. Given these sites, this collection serves as a useful companion to Linda Williams’ seminal 1989 book *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the “Frenzy of the Visible,”* particularly in the ways it similarly joins industrial histories, textual analyses, questions of power and politics, and mobilizations of critical theory in an effort to understand sexual pleasure both on- and off-screen.¹ While specific in its focus on a national cinema, this collection nevertheless offers much to the field of pornography studies more generally in its methods, questions, and conclusions. Ultimately, that might make an eighth entry in Nornes’s list. A book on Pink Film is necessary today because Pink Film needs to be included as an important part of pornography studies.

My goal in this brief afterword is not to critique the individual entries in this collection, nor to introduce new perspectives on Pink Film or its layered and complicated histories, but instead to highlight the important ways in which these essays, their methods, topics, and questions are already participating in conversations among North American pornography studies scholars and historians—but, even more importantly, how much they have to offer those conversations and the field more broadly. Given the recent surge in pornography studies—as evidenced by the arrival of the first peer-reviewed journal on the topic, *Porn Studies*, set to begin publication in 2014 from Rout-

ledge—this collection adds to a growing phase in the field that promises new developments, research protocols, case studies, and historical insights.

First and foremost, the focus throughout this collection on industrial history might serve as a model for pornography studies, which to this point has often neglected such approaches. The essays by Roland Domenig and Kimata Kimihiko in particular, which trace the etymology of Pink Film and its early histories in great detail, offer a veritable roadmap for the kind of work that still needs to be done on the North American adult film industry. Examples of such work remains relatively rare in pornography studies, with examples such as Joseph Slade's early examination of adult theaters and his later outlining of the adult film landscape in the 1990s, Chuck Kleinhans' economic analysis of the adult video industry, Eric Schaefer's tracings of the impact of various celluloid technologies, Lynn Comella's study of sex-toy stores, and my own work on the technological transformation of the industry as it moved its distribution from theaters to home video being exceptions rather than commonplace.² Domenig and Kimata illustrate the type of in-depth research that needs to be done on pornography industries, as well connecting that research to historically-specific questions involving cultural, political, and technological concerns.

Indeed, much of this collection illustrates the importance of moving away from the films themselves and into surrounding contexts, a crucial step for scholars in gaining a more complete picture of pornography industries and histories. Michael Arnold's analysis of the Pink Film set photography of Tsuda Ichiro marks such work as a key vantage point from which to examine the industry, representing another crucial intervention. Such peripheral industry members and their work are often overlooked, but present key research points for scholars seeking to understand deeper contexts of adult film production. Arnold's work recalls Barbara Nitke's 2012 book *American Ecstasy*, a collection of her photographs from adult film sets in the 1980s.³ As with Tsuda, Nitke's photographs reveal something beyond simple documentation; instead, they illustrate the ways in which the adult film industry operates *as* an industry, replete with various hierarchies of labor, performance, and preparation—as well as the mundane mechanics of manufacturing pleasure. What can makeup artists, hairstylists, gaffers, grips, and caterers who work on adult productions tell us about the industry? Set photographers should be only the beginning.

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These essays also reveal unexpected methodological approaches that offer a great deal to the field as a whole. Kirsten Cather's essay on Pink Film regulation serves as a significant signpost in that regard, and needs to be taken up by pornography scholars going forward. Highlighting the difference between Walter Kendrick, who argued in *The Secret Museum* (1987) that the history of the regulation of pornography is the history of pornography, and Williams, who countered Kendrick by focusing on the films rather than their regulation in *Hard Core*, Cather eloquently and forcefully finds tremendous purpose in rethinking regulation not as an object to be studied, but as a source for historical research.⁴ "[B]ecause the majority of Pink Films no longer exist, the traces left in censorship accounts are often all that remains for piecing together a larger picture," she writes—delineating a valuable research strategy for anyone conducting a historical study of pornography. Cather identifies here a distinct advantage pornography historians frequently have over their mainstream counterparts: traces of censorship often reveal a great deal of historical information for the scholar. Ironically, this often makes the past more visible, despite the efforts of the original censors. In this work, Cather joins Justin Wyatt, Jon Lewis, and Lee Grieveson, among others, in linking various forms of regulation in a matrix to reveal deeper cultural and industrial meanings around adult films.⁵ The field needs a great deal more of this work, and Cather's essay illustrates not merely the method, but the value to the field as well.

Questions of politics appear throughout this collection, just as they do in many Pink Films. Nearly every entry here confronts the politics frequently embedded within the genre (whether overt or subtle), especially Yuriko Furuhashi and Sharon Hayashi, who delve into the films of Wakamatsu Koji to illustrate the necessity of keeping analyses of the political elements at the foreground of Pink Film research. Pink Film, perhaps more than any other adult film genre, frequently included overt political content alongside its erotic imagery, making it as much a marker of a specific place and time as much as anything else. Furuhashi's analysis of the "breaking news" aspect of Wakamatsu's films links them, as she notes, to the American exploitation film tradition; the American films frequently capitalized on contemporary moral and cultural anxieties, a history taken up most prominently by Eric Schaefer in his landmark 1999 book *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!: A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959*.⁶ Yet, as Furuhashi and Hayashi carefully delineate, Wakamatsu's Pink Films were cut from a different, more politically intense

and aggressive cloth marking them as substantially different. The US-Japan Security Treaty, the resulting protests, and the overall political climate produced a unique set of factors contributing to specific cultural and industrial climates; scholars and historians of adult films in other locales could do much to follow these examples in linking a diverse set of factors into a better understanding of the links between cultural and industrial practices.

The various discussions of the political potential of Pink Film, both here and in general regarding the genre, raise questions as to the actual efficacy of those politics. Andrew Grossman's critique in this collection of the assumed progressive potential of Pink Film offers a useful counter perspective, and makes a critical, deeply questioning statement for the field: "We must ask anew how erotic art can manifest political rebellion." Indeed, we must ask that question—much as we must ask other, related questions about manifestation. What, if anything, can erotic art manifest? Can Grossman's critique be limited strictly to political rebellion? And why has there been an assumption that erotic art *could* manifest rebellion? Perhaps part of the answer has been the relentless debates over justification, both for and against pornography itself, as well as its study. More than any other genre, pornography has been subject to such debate—and Grossman's essay, and particularly his probing of the intricacies of manifestation, places it squarely into what might be a step forward in those discussions.

Such debates and tensions have firm feminist roots, which continue to reside squarely within the field. Miryam Sas's entry in this collection adds a welcome perspective on director Hamano Sachi, and her identification of the motif of "knowing the truth of sex" throughout Hamano's films links it to long-standing questions about the genre and its capabilities. Williams, of course, made this a central question of *Hard Core*, arguing that "the animating male fantasy of hard-core cinema might therefore be described as the (impossible) attempt to capture visually [the] frenzy of the visible in a female body whose orgasmic can never be objectively measured."⁷ Sas's exploration of similar themes and questions within Hamano's films places it squarely into a long trajectory of feminist theorization of pornography that includes such landmark works as Lara Kipnis's 1996 book *Bound and Gagged: The Politics of Fantasy in America* and Jane Juffer's 1998 book *At Home With Pornography: Women, Sex, and Everyday Life*, both of which, from different perspectives and with different evidence, tried to examine many of these concerns.⁸

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Even more importantly, Sas's examination foregrounds a female filmmaker within the genre, modeling necessary work that remains in adult film scholarship at large. Candida Royalle, who, in 1984, founded Femme Productions, the first female-driven adult film production company in the United States, has received the bulk of scholarly attention, there are myriad other women in adult film history whose contributions and careers have not yet been acknowledged or examined.⁹ Suze Randall, Svetlana Marsh, and Joyce Snyder, among many others, represent ideal, and very necessary, case studies for scholars seeking a more complete understanding of women's participation behind the camera in adult film history.

Sas's essay also comes during a period in which feminist analyses of pornography, as well as overtly feminist film productions, are experiencing a dramatic period of growth. The recent publication of *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure*, a collection of essays from scholars, activists, and industry members, might be the most visible sign of this growth.¹⁰ That collection highlights the present state of the field, which has taken up the challenge of firmly refuting the anti-pornography critiques long familiar to pornography studies, but also gives voice directly to those filmmakers and performers working to change both the perception and content of adult film and its industrial practices. Sas's essay fits squarely within such recent work, and illustrates the continued need for similar research outside the North American adult film industry.

Textual analyses recur frequently throughout this collection, but Julian Stringer's entry raises particularly prescient questions for pornography studies in this moment, just as the North American adult film industry has turned almost completely to parodies as its primary source of revenue. Stringer's astute observation that the new, parodic "text reveals what is repressed or hidden in the... prior texts" is remarkably useful for understanding the economic impulse to *make* adult film parodies—but also for understanding their popularity. While parody films, to varying degrees, have long been a staple for the industry, the recent surge in both their production and increased attention to verisimilitude reveals an impulse, precisely as Stringer identifies, to show what is *already* in the prior text, but repressed. Directors such as Axel Braun, with his superhero parody films, are not necessarily interested in mocking the source texts or even finding humor in them, but instead in uncovering the sexual fantasies of the audience *within* those texts. In other

words, much of the audience already imagines Superman and Lois Lane having sex; Braun simply makes it a “reality”. Stringer’s work in this regard joins Peter Lehman and Nina K. Martin in a small, but essential, body of work on adult film parodies and the ways in which their humor (or lack thereof) convey deep political and ideological meanings, as well as offering commentary on the original materials.¹¹

The obvious interest throughout this collection in the specific status of Pink Film and its lack of explicit sex raises a complex set of questions regarding the very nature of pornography itself. It also recalls David Andrews’ excellent 2006 book *Soft in the Middle: The Contemporary Softcore Feature and its Contexts*, as well as gesturing toward the need for more work on non-explicit adult film.¹² For example, historians have barely examined the rise of the “cable versions” of hardcore films in the 1980s, produced by distributors in reaction to the escalation of obscenity prosecutions after the rise of home video. Such versions, which continue to populate hotels rooms and cable systems, are frequently overlooked despite their widespread proliferation. Discussions of hardcore versus softcore and their essential differences take the discussion into theoretical terrain, and Arnold’s astute questions in his essay in this collection about the nature and meaning of pro-filmic sex and its relation to reality and truth illuminate those complexities. If, as Arnold suggests, “Pink Film encourages us only to imagine what we *don’t* see,” then the genre, perhaps even more than its hardcore counterpart, asks scholars to re-examine the relations of spectators, fantasies, and content. Such core issues have had deep resonance through the history of pornography studies, and, in fact, form much of the basis of anti-pornography arguments. The claims to reality (in the on-set actions as well as the mediated results) can lead viewers down a path toward differentiating pornography from other film genres simply on that basis. Much of this differentiation is, of course, self-perpetuated by the industry in its effort to ensure as much authenticity as possible. However, this does not necessarily differ from other genres that lack explicit sex. Nearly all films aim, through various mechanisms, for “authenticity”, yet there are few claims that Hollywood is in the business of producing documentaries. Pornography, for a variety of ideological reasons and through a variety of cultural and legal means, is nearly universally held to a separate standard that obsesses over its content.

Such standards deeply influence pornography studies, most often by insisting (however covertly) that the primary intervention always begin and end with either a defense or a critique. As Lara Kipnis argues, this means that the terms of most debates over the validity of the genre are determined in advance by pornography's opponents, placing the entire field into an endlessly repeated cycle.¹³ This stems, in many ways, from the interest in pornography's apparent "realism" and its implications. In one prominent example, Christian Hansen, Catherine Needham, and Bill Nichols linked pornography and ethnography, claiming that both "depend on the assurance that what the spectator sees really happened," and that viewers reject efforts to "fake" the actions.¹⁴ These sorts of arguments take for granted that "realism" was not simply the goal, but also the result. Yet *Pink Film*, as Arnold describes, throws such readings into chaos, illuminating the same potential questions about pornography in general.

What does it mean to say something "really happened," particularly on an adult film set? Does it mean penetration? Orgasm? Pleasure? Does it mean the spectator found pleasure? What if none of those things actually happened, but pleasure still occurred, either on set or with the spectator? *Pink Film* might be an obvious location in which to interrogate the constructed nature of these elements (a nature the industry firmly depends upon to sell its various types of verisimilitude), but the same questions might be asked of all adult films, hardcore or otherwise. What makes pornography any more or less "real" than action films? Dramas? Comedies? If performers cry in a dramatic scene, does that mean they "genuinely" felt sad—or does it simply mean they should be praised for their acting ability? Similarly, as a field, will we be able to reach a point where we focus less on the "reality" of the sexual act (and particularly the visible male orgasm) as the "proof" of authentic pleasure, and instead think of it all as performance? This does not mean that politics need to be evacuated from the discussion, only that the performative nature of the content's origins be acknowledged rather than taken for granted as "authentic". Arnold's interrogation of the *maebari* in particular might serve to open new channels of analysis for pornography studies: how and why does the *maebari* obscure what the audience can see, but also raise what it obscures to even greater visibility? Arnold wisely links these questions to notions of obscenity itself, an area which scholars must continue to pursue, in both legal and cultural contexts. The definitions and meanings of obscenity, never quite untangled from pornography itself, have always represented (and

show no signs of abatement) some of the most necessary points of entry for scholars. How pornography, obscenity, and “reality” *become* entangled represents a great deal of potential, critical work.

Finally, this brings up the question that circulates throughout this collection at various times and in various forms: what can scholars and historians make of a genre that spectators do not necessarily “watch” in the traditional sense—but instead use as an accessory, or even mere background, for their own pleasures? This question could be perhaps the most important in all of pornography studies, and one that work on Pink Film might be uniquely equipped to answer. Adult film audiences, particularly in public spaces such as theaters and peep booths, have long used their surroundings as a means to a pleasurable end, either alone or with nearby, willing partners. Scholars can seek political meaning (overt or covert), feminist readings and recuperations, star and auteur studies, industrial histories, and many other elements within Pink and other adult films, but how are these elements complicated by a spectator simply seeking an accommodating (even welcoming) place to find literal pleasure? In other words, what does it mean when the films themselves might be secondary to what else preoccupies audiences? These questions recall Samuel Delany’s extraordinary and unusual 2001 book *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*, which asks similar questions about the behavior of audiences in and around New York’s Times Square theaters.¹⁵ That Delaney utilizes an autoethnographic approach throughout his book links it even more to this collection; Richie’s essay here, as well as Arnold’s and Nornes’ work, illustrate the necessity of firsthand observation, which lends a unique perspective on the activities on- and off-screen.

These questions have particular salience for queer pornographies and audiences. Theaters (along with arcades and adult bookstores and video stores) have long provided a space for patrons (and male patrons in particular) in which sexual pleasure, enacted literally, occurs within the proximity of adult film, but not necessarily in direct relation to its content. As John Champagne argues, when it comes to understanding pornography, the text should be de-centered in order to make room for behavior. “The porno arcade/theater,” he writes, “constitutes a kind of nexus in which (male homo)sexual subjects engage in a game in which they attempt to find alternative ways of using the constraining order of heteronormative society.”¹⁶ The space of the theater itself, which Champagne describes not as “queer” but as

“polymorphously perverse” (a move that acknowledges the sexual fluidity of many of those who seek out sexual pleasure in such spaces), becomes a vital and oppositional location in which the activities of those inside are neither defined nor conscribed by what appears on-screen; rather, the presence of sexual activity opens the possibility of its replication in reality—and, as Champagne argues, provides an energetic and enthusiastic alternative to heteronormative culture. Similarly, Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner argue that “public sex” of all kinds (including the activities at adult theaters) provide an essential counterpoint to the “intimacy” embedded in heteronormativity. They argue that “modern heterosexuality is supposed to refer to relations of intimacy and identification with other persons, and sex acts are supposed to be the most intimate communication of them all.”¹⁷ Thus, for queer consumers who find sexual pleasures off-screen at adult movie theaters, the texts themselves might be irrelevant, serving only as a backdrop for the lived pleasures occurring simultaneously. The many, ongoing historic efforts to limit, contain, and eradicate the potential of these pleasures, from zoning laws to police raids to removing doors from peep booths, represent the cultural effort to keep the focus on the mediated, rather than actual, pleasures. Focusing on these pleasures, along with and alongside the texts themselves, thus represent a critical approach for those scholars interested in pornography, and especially queer pornography, as a social practice and not just a collection of texts.

Pornography studies has rarely addressed such questions, seeking instead to focus most often on the tangible, empirical, historical, and political, while leaving spectatorial behavior out of the equation. While difficult to analyze, and perhaps even more difficult to research, such questions remain crucial to pornography studies. Much like audiences in the United States during the “Golden Age” of hardcore films in the 1970s, Pink Film spectators cruise for sexual partners, using the onscreen material as something other than a narrative world in which to be immersed. While most existing research has skirted these questions, future work must engage not just the *politics* surrounding mediated pleasure, but also its literal enactments. Pink Film theaters, with their somewhat anachronistic exhibition practices, represent among the last remaining spaces where such work can be done. Nornes is absolutely correct when he points out in the introduction that reception context is vital to the genre—but such logic could, and should, be extended to pornography as whole. It is not until we have a better understanding of how pornography is

used by audiences that we can have a better understanding of pornography in general. This collection makes critical steps in that direction, but also illustrates the wide gulf yet to be crossed. As Arnold argues, “A fine line must be drawn between the discursive ideal and the cinematic actuality of Pink,” which can, once again, be extended to include pornography in general. Future work needs to examine and theorize both the spaces in which the content is viewed (or not viewed) as well as the spectators. We have only the slightest understanding of the practices of adult film spectators and the spaces, both private and public, in which those practices are (and were) enacted.

Ultimately, this collection might be understood as not about reaching in to Japan to examine Pink Film and its histories, characteristics, reception practices, and complications, but rather about circulating those elements in a broader conversation about mediated pleasures, all the while recognizing the cultural uniqueness in terms of space, place, and context. Nevertheless, the cross-cultural similarities between Pink Film and its North American counterparts illustrate how such conversations can add to a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of human behavior vis-à-vis mediated pleasures, as well as how those pleasures are manufactured, mediated, regulated, contained, and contested. Sharon Hayashi, in her essay herein, might say it best: “History is never merely a question of the past but how we reinvent it for the present and the future.” This collection takes an important step down the path of just such reinvention.

NOTES

¹ Williams, *Hard Core*, 238-263.

² Slade, “Pornographic Theaters Off Times Square,” 35-43, 79; Slade, “Pornography in the Late Nineties,” 1-12; Kleinhans, “The Change from Film to Video Pornography,” 154-167; Schaefer, “Gauging a Revolution,” 3-26; Comella, “From Text to Context,” 79-96; Alilunas, *Smutty Little Movies*.

³ Nitke, *American Ecstasy*.

⁴ Kendrick, *The Secret Museum: Porn*.

⁵ Wyatt, “The Stigma of X,”; Lewis, *Hollywood V. Hard Core*; Grieverson, *Policing Cinema*.

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⁶ Schaefer, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!*.

⁷ Williams, *Hard Core*, 50.

⁸ Kipnis, *Bound and Gagged*; Juffer, *At Home with Pornography*.

⁹ For a prominent example of academic attention to Royalle, see: Williams, *Hard Core*, 246-264.

¹⁰ *The Feminist Porn Book*.

¹¹ Lehman, "Twin Cheeks, Twin Peeks, and Twin Freaks: Porn's Transgressive Remake Humor"; Martin, "Never Laugh at a Man with His Pants Down," 188-205.

¹² Andrews, *Soft in the Middle*.

¹³ Kipnis, *Bound and Gagged*, x.

¹⁴ Hansen, Needham and Nichols, "Pornography, Ethnography, and the Discourses of Power," 216.

¹⁵ Delany, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*.

¹⁶ Champagne, "'Stop Reading Films!'" 77.

¹⁷ Berlant and Warner, "Sex in Public," 555.

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Donald Richie was one of the pioneers of Japanese film studies. He arrived in Japan in 1947 and spent most of his life there. He wrote novels,

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music, painted, and was an accomplished experimental filmmaker. However, he is best known for his essays on every aspect of Japanese culture, and his major studies of Japanese film. The latter include the general history he wrote with Joseph Anderson, *The Japanese Film: Art & Industry*, *The Films of Akira Kurosawa*, *Ozu: His Life and Films*, and *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*. He passed away in 2013.

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Tsuda Ichiro is a prominent photographer in Japan. Born in Hokkaido, he studied economics at Chuo University. He began his photography career at a PR company in the mid-1960s, before going independent. While he works in a wide variety of genres, he is known as a chronicler of the Pink world. Tsuda has shot stills, posters and video packaging for Pink Films, and now AV, to the present day. His work has been recognized with the prestigious Ina Nobuo and Domon Ken awards. A founding member of the Japan Photographers Association, he now serves as its president.

Japanese cinema has an unusual history of sexual representation. Where standard Hollywood style kisses were long forbidden in Japanese cinema until the U.S. Occupation, in the 60's and 70's a particular type of sex film flourished. Analogous to, but much more stylistically adventurous and widespread than, the American genre of "sexploitation", Pink Films were differentiated from "Blue" movies by the absence of hard-core sexual action. But beyond that limitation, almost anything was possible in these widescreen, feature length, 35mm treasures where many a Japanese director learned his or her craft. The fascinating *The Pink Book* is for anyone who has pondered the odd prohibitions and permissions of Japanese cinema.

—Linda Williams, UC Berkeley

This strange collection of brains has drawn an untouchable picture of the Pink Cinema. It is not simply a record of their wanderings around the utter darkness of the Japanese soft core sex film world. It is a story—for any reader—more pleasurable than a child's secret treasure box!

—Adachi Masao, director

Just as Pink Film was a challenge to fixed ideas about Japanese cinema, being so central to the development of contemporary Japanese film yet existing on the denigrated margins of the movie world, *The Pink Book*, while containing work by top scholars, is a challenge to academic Japanese cinema studies. It dares scholarship to explore ways to understand the intersections between sex, gender, politics, industry, and history without resorting to safe categories like "art film" or "pop culture". An independent production like its subject matter, it breaks boundaries with its breadth and diversity, and offers models for where film studies can go.

—Aaron Gerow, Yale University