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**Book Section:**
Taylor-Jones, K. orcid.org/0000-0002-4335-3119 (2018) Rhythm, texture, moods: Ozu Yasujiro, Claire Denis and a vision of a postcolonial aesthetic. In: Choi, J., (ed.) Reorienting Ozu: A master and his influence. Oxford University Press , pp. 215-232. ISBN 9780190254971

https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190254971.003.0013

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FROM: The Ozuesque: Ozu and His Influence, Edt. Jinhee Choi, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Forthcoming Sep 2016.

# Rhythm, Texture, Moods: Ozu Yasujiro, Claire Denis and a vision of a post-colonial aesthetic

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While few global studies situate the experience of Japan at the heart of the post-colonial narrative, Japan was one the most longstanding non-western modern empires.[1] Although the Japanese colonial period is a rapidly growing area of research when you compare the number of studies focusing on the colonial past and the post-colonial present of France, Germany, Italy or the UK, the lack of systematic engagement with Japan as a site of colonial power is a problematic oversight. This chapter will engage with questions of a post-colonial aesthetic and examine the work of Ozu Yasujiro from this angle alongside French director Claire Denis who has openly expressed how Ozu continues to inspire her own work.[2] The hegemonic experiences of the colonising nation are at the heart of many of Claire Denis's films as she struggles to articulate the French post-colonial moment and therefore a clear argument can be made with regards to her work. However, while the environments that Ozu was working inside are not part of the prototypical representational dynamics of the colonial and post-colonial moment, nevertheless can an interrogative and post-colonial aesthetic be found in his work in the years following Japans defeat?

I am certainly not arguing in anyway for us to see post-colonial as a specific "genre," rather to see it as an approach. The main aim of this chapter is to debate the question what is or could be a postcolonial aesthetic and to suggest ways in which this

aesthetic approach can be utilised in the analysis of film. The question of what a postcolonial aesthetic might be raises a series of questions that debates the very nature of both terms. For Immanuel Kant aesthetics could be characterized as an "analytic of the beautiful"[3] and, via the work of early post-structuralism, aesthetics were linked with notions of value and thereby prejudice. In short, aesthetics became "a tool of diverseness, enmity and oppression."[4] However, rather than continuing the insistence of aesthetics as related to the construction of beauty, recent work has developed and nuanced the debate. Rather than an examination on beauty per se, aesthetics have become a "specific kind of human experience"[5], one that allows you challenge ' our intellects as well as our perceptual and emotional capacities. To meet all these challenges simultaneously is to experience aesthetically."[6]

This focus on the aesthetic experience would be a preoccupation with Theodore Adorno who announced that aesthetics ultimately declares an untruth. For him there is the inescapable fact that the aesthetic remains "allied to ideology,"[7] the question of the relationship between truth and representation remains a site of tension. Thereby as Elleke Boehmer comments the aesthetic lies between two poles of differentiation –as "autonomous, in-and-for-itself" and the "aesthetic as deeply complicit."[8] The aim of this chapter is not to refute other readings of the films but rather to open the debate up further. The goal is to write less about and more though the films as I explore how postcolonial aesthetics allows for the development of what Kaja Silverman calls the "productive look."[9] Although I do not wholeheartedly subscribe to the psychoanalytical background to Silverman's consideration on the aesthetic, her engagement with images as a site of affective development is helpful. In short, the process though which the normative process of identification making is ruptured, via the ability of image to allow previously hidden and closed images, to be made

available for scrutiny. The rich array of (re) presentations that the aesthetic calls forth allows for an illumination of ideals that would otherwise remain hidden and thus, in their presentation, we see a rupture between the idealised image and our engagement with it. As Silverman puts it, "we cannot idealise something without at the same time identifying with it" vis-à-vis the "formal and libidinal properties of highly charged images."[10] Therefore, the aesthetic can operate in two ways: firstly, as a process via which memories that dominant culture seeks to repress are highlighted, and secondly, by simultaneously requiring the subject to learn to love that is not him-or herself. In her discussion of Chris Marker's Sans Soleil (1983) Silverman states,

> [the film] opens itself up to "penetration" by them [other cultures], and it repeatedly registers and retransmits the shock of that encounter. It provides an extended dramatization of and meditation upon the operations of memory, which it puts to highly unusual purposes. It "remembers," and encourages the viewer to "remember," what might best be characterized as "other people's memories." In the process, it both radically revises what it means to look at Japan and Africa and engages the viewer in an exemplary self-estrangement.[11]

This "productive look" therefore means to "confer identity, not to find it" and it is this process of distance, deferral and reconstitution that proves a powerful argument when it comes to seeing the aesthetic as more that "just beauty" and a relevant and productive tool in the box of postcolonial studies. Boer's study After Orientalism develops this productive look and aims to allow for us to learn "to see differently, but only after having recognized the necessary struggle with the dominant elements on the screen".[12] The aesthetic therefore is inseparable from the order it critiques. Alan

Shapiro describes the aesthetic as "that emphatic power of entering into the moral experience of others" and he adds that this "capacity for ethical discrimination…can alter the very conventions which inform it."[13] Thus the aesthetic is defined through this "theoretical confusion" and, as Geoffrey Galt Harpham notes, "the indecipherability between object and subject freedom and repressive law, critical and uncritical passages, grievous and necessary misreading, even art and ideology."[14] In other words, aesthetic texts come from the context in which they are set but "provide access to the privileged signifiers of those contexts."[15]

To summarise Boehmers comments, a postcolonial aesthetic text "would be that which most successfully, movingly, harmoniously, interrogated and integrated the language of the former empire."[16] The term postcolonial itself is notoriously indefinable but what is clear is that an engagement with the debate on the aesthetic and the postcolonial has been rather neglected in the cinema studies. The two edited collections examining the postcolonial and cinema both neglect aesthetics as a point worth serious discussion and yet the films visual content as opposed to pure narrative, is never far from the points being made.[17]

Seeing Japan in the lexicon of post-colonial raises two key issues – Japan as coloniser extraordinaire with an extensive colonial and imperial empire[18] and Japan as colonised in the American occupation of 1945-52. Thus, the work of Ozu is doubly entangled in the processes of the loss of one colonial narrative and the imposition of another. I turn here to Herbert Marcuse's comments on the aesthetic as a place of transformation,

> "Aesthetic form" means the total of qualities (harmony, rhythm, contrast) which make an oeuvre a self-contained whole, with a structure and order of its own (the style). By virtue of these qualities the work of art transforms the

> order prevailing in reality. This transformation is "illusion," but an illusion which gives the contents represented a meaning and a function different from those they have in the prevailing universe of discourse. (emphasis in original) [19]

There is a tension between content and form. Where the content may give the specifics whilst the form—"the total qualities that make the work of? a self-contained whole set off from external reality"[20]—allows for a transcendence of context. For Marcuse, the aesthetic is capable of breaking though reality and enacting a potential of a positive change.[21] So what are the aesthetics in the work of Ozu and Denis? Both directors have had a series of studies devoted to their aesthetic traits. For Laura McMahon, Denis works, "combine an emphasis on materiality with modes of anti-representational minimalism, decoupling film from the constraints of narrative in an elaboration of the textured facticity of images and sound."[22] This can be most clearly seen in films such as Beau Travail (1999), White Material (2009) and Trouble Every Day (2001) where there is a consistent fracturing of image, sound and narrative to create a space where all the characters are marked with a sense of ambiguity. This ambiguity provides a resource of potential connotation that can be utilised in the articulation of the complications and ambivalences of the postcolonial. As Homi Bhabha notes, "it is in the emergence of the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated."[23]

The English language scholarship on Ozu's aesthetics has, to date, been largely based on notions of nationality. Paul Schraders definition of Ozu as "transcendental" and Burch's construction of Ozu's works as direct refusal of

Hollywood modes of dominant representations have frequently serve to place Ozu in a distinct category of his own where aesthetics are concerned[24]. Bordwell and Thompson's continence in this vein with their notions of parametrical style has allowed for a clear demarcation between Japan and Hollywood to be maintained in many studies and the work of Ozu to become a key marker in the debate on the "Japanesenness" of a filmic image. Whilst this approach has been disagreed with in several quarters, the aesthetics of Ozu are often defined in terms of the auteur rather than seeing them as potential part of a wider debate on aesthetic representation.

What both Denis and Ozu share can be seen in the textured pattern of images and sounds that dominate both their respective work in a variety of ways. This process of a texture of repetition can be found prominently in Ozu's A Hen in the Wind (Kaze no naka no mendori, 1948). A Hen in the Wind has certainly not been the most lauded of Ozu's work with Ozu himself apparently denoted the film a poor failure[25] and to date the film has suffered much neglect in English language film scholarship. Yet, when seen in terms of form and content, it is a valuable addition when considering Ozu's oeuvre in the post-war period. The narrative of this little discussed film focuses on a young mother who is forced into a night of prostitution when her young son is taken ill. On confessing this event to her husband, who has just been repatriated from war, she is shocked as he demands the intimate details of the encounter and then rapes and beats her. Finally, after seriously injuring her when he knocks her down the stairs, and after he has made a failed attempt to visit a prostitute in revenge, he decides to forgive her. The film returns again and again to the same images as the family seek to deal with the trauma that befalls them. Taking as a key example the rape scene, we see a flight of stairs become a key focus in the traumatic interplay between husband and wife. The scene is mostly in medium

or medium long shot and is marked by the movement of the camera between a series of static images interspersed with the couple arguing and the eventual assault and rape of the wife. The image that is returned to again and again and eventually concludes the scene, is a medium long shot of the stairs that divide the two floors of the house. Dar, narrow, and seemingly meaningless given the context of the argument, they become a key focal point of the scene and indeed the film more broadly. The progression to the rape is almost staccato in appearance and is punctuated by repeated images throughout the short scene. The stairs are therefore a key element in this process of repetition. The curious shot/reverse shot framing of the two characters alternating from their faces to their backs gives a tremendous sense of disconnection and for a comparatively short scene we have a remarkable number of shots. Many of these shots are superfluous to the narrative of the husband demanding information but they serve to provide the sense of the dissolution of the family unit. Hen in the Wind is very unusual in Ozu's films that violence and aggression are clearly shown (and perhaps this is why it has been neglected as it fails to confirm to the domain images of Ozu's works), and yet, this violence serves to present the trauma of the wider social moment. The stairs that returned to again and again throughout the film become a working metaphor for flux and change the social space has entered into after the war period. Hasumi Shigehiko notes that stairs themselves are a rare presence in Ozu's film,[26] and in this case, the film returns to the exact same shot which makes the terrible fall that Tokiko takes down them at near the film's conclusion all the more startling. The repeated images and their interplay, serve to open up a textual space that moves beyond the films narrative to create a sense of the post-war moment and the colonial past. The film is littered with empty shell casings and references to US domination including vast cola signs and movie posters adorning shabby walls.

Outside the home space the most dominating element is the large gas tower that goes up and down over the duration of the narrative and is returned to again and again. There are changes - the building goes up and down alerting us to the passing of time but the time that has passed in unspecific – hence the film shifts into temporary flux where the external activities are dislocated from the internal tensions that are taking place in the home. There is a rupture between the internal spaces of family life and the external spaces of post-war Japan. The home is no longer a space of safety and respite; it becomes the stage where the post-colonial moment will be enacted out. Inside the brothel space whilst Tokiko commits her act of prostitution, there is a circular movement by which we move from the shot of sake on the table, a futon with a fan and then the corridor of the brothel. This is then enacted in reverse as we move from the brothel back to the home of Tokiko. This reverse movement of camera confuses and cross cuts the two respective domestic spaces and is perhaps an ideal example of that Japanese film critic Sato Tadao's focus on Tokiko as the site of the loss of national purity as the sanctity of the home becomes embroiled in the results of war and defeat.[27] Tokiko's actions and Shuichi's violence, rather than being placed as the site of individual responsibility, are seen as a collective result of the failure of the imperial moment, the brutalising effect of war on all aspects of society and the resultant American occupation. At previous point in the film, the brothel had been intercut with scenes from a children's playground making the perhaps not so subtle link between the reason for Tokiko and many other women in the post-war period to enter prostitution.

This interplay between the internal and the external as an articulation of the colonial past are also seen though Denis work, most clearly in White Material. While in Hen in the Wind the empty shell casing are littering the field of vision and the

family unit is dissolving under the pressure of events, White Material shows the land as covered in the bodies of the dead and the remains of the burnt-out buildings destroyed in the conflict. The family unit is completely dysfunctional primarily due to its matriarch Maria's inability to realise the truth about her lazy and violent son and the key fact that the colonial moment has passed and her family are no longer able to survive in the new country being formed around them. The survival kits that are dropped by the French army helicopter are a stark reminder that this is a landscape fraught with danger and for the French colonial subject a territory where they are profoundly not wanted. The title itself related to a literal act of being – white materials literally do not do well in the African sun. As the DJ in the film comments "for the white material the party is over" and yet Marie's own arrogant sense of ownership refuses to allow her to understand that her belief of her own superior sense of belonging to the land was built on falsehoods and colonial aggression. The film's aesthetics are fractures and dislocated as it moves from the bright outside landscape to the dark and repressive family home. The dichotomy of movement and stasis can be seen reflected in both White Material and Hen in the Wind and like in Ozu, images are repeatedly shown and build up a textured pattern that allow the audience to enter into a flux of affective relations between image, sound and narrative. What becomes a key element in all of these films is the sheer unknowability of the post-colonial moment.

Return to Ozu I now turn to the film made prior to Hen in the Wind, which in English language goes by the inaccurately translated title of Record of a Tenement Gentleman (Nagaya shinshiroku, 1947).[28] The basic story revolves around Otane, an elderly rather curmudgeonly woman, who ends up having to take care of an abandoned boy. Although she initially tries to drive him away and treats him with general disdain and verbal abuse, she eventually learns to love and care for him. This

film, unlike Hen in the Wind, has received more attention from scholars and its role in the post-war moment has brought about a series of debate about the symbolism of the shots and images shown. Edward Fowler focus on the futon that the young boy urinates on due to night terrors as a symbol of an America flag literally been "pissed on" and for Fowler, the film "operates at widely varying levels of concealment." [29] This process allows for the narrative and the visual to take slightly different pathways; with the tale of woman taking care of an orphaned boy (acceptable to the US occupation cinema codes) juxtaposed with images that imply "a blunt and xenophobic message to his Japanese audiences without getting caught by his American one".[30] Take the statue of Saigo Takamori, leader of the Satsuma rebellion and a radical nationalist and an early and active supporter of the invasion of Korea and the establishment of the Empire of Japan. At the conclusion of the film, after Otane decided to adopt another boy, she is informed that many orphaned children go to congregate there in Ueno park. So the question is raised about whether the children collected at the bottom of his bird dropping covered statue represent a critique of the colonial past or a longing to return to it? Is the status a criticism of the American occupation or indeed a criticism of Japan for its imperial past that led to such events? The very presence of this image raises some key questions about the film's intention and its status in the cannon of post-war Japanese cinema even if the reading remains opaque and subjective. Opening up clear signifiers of the post-war occupation is not a process of pronouncing right and wrong but rather inviting a viewer to read his or her own engagement into the narrative. Both Denis and Ozu are directors who are marked by a mise-en-scene of fragmentation, creating a process by which signification remains floating. There have of course been endless debates on the meaning behind the vase in Late Spring (which I am not going to re-debate here as generally well

covered elsewhere),[31] and what becomes clear is that the unknowablity of the cinematic images allows the viewing to develop new lines of thought and connection with the patterns on the screen.

Taking further this process of the unknowability, the ending of Denis's Beau Travail has been open to a myriad of different readings and considerations. The narrative, based on Herman Melville's Billy Budd, examines the destructive and ultimately murderous desire that French Foreign Legion Officer Galoup develops for a young, popular and charismatic recruit Sentain. Set for the most part in deserts of Djibouti we see Galoup descend into madness and eventually attempt to kill Sentain. Back in France, away from the heat of Djibouti, the camera focuses on Galoup's tattoo, "serve the good cause and die? [sers la bonne cause et meurs]" and the throbbing vein in an arm that holds his army service pistol as he lies prostrate with melancholy on his bed in Marseilles. From this ending the film then returns to Galoup once again in the dance hall in Djibouti, and this time, unlike in the earlier section of the film when he dances with his men and the local women, he is alone. He then dances erratically to the music whilst facing a giant mirror, and then as the music concludes, he vanishes out of the door at the back of the club. Unsurprisingly, the ambiguity of the final scene is one that has raised many questions among critics. His final dance for some has been read as Galoup's regeneration/redemption,[32] and for others a final dance of death.[33] Galoup has literally decided to "serve the good cause and die." The main focus is on Galoup's body as he performs his disjointed and erratic dance routine and the tension between reality, truth and fantasy. The whole film, but particularly the ending, is complicated by internal consistencies in spatio-temporality of the aesthetic moment. In Beau Travail we are unable to clarify and define the complex images of the ending. Janet Bergstrom comments that Denis's

"conception on the 'unspoken' is not a silent language of images. It is linked to opacity."[34] This opacity serves not to alienate the viewers but serves to allow the filmmaker to "repudiate the widespread practices of closure which yield…only the false semblance of an honest explanation."[35] This rejection of a close-ended resolution is a call that is echoed in postcolonial studies where, the aim is to examine, debate and discuss, in short a future-oriented process. Although the continual issue of the "writing back" and against the centre has resulted in a disciplinary post-colonialism that for some have become closed and restrictive, the post-colonial "implies a critique and rejection of colonial forms of sociality; it also, however, gestures beyond critique and moves towards constructivism in so far as it properly emphasises a positive task barely begun: the conceptual creation of a 'new horizon,'"[36] Postcolonial aesthetics therefore is mode of engagement with an article that involves "emotional, evaluative and intellectual appreciation."[37] Michael Sullivan and John T. Lysaker note, the tension between subject and object may be the very key to emancipatory theory and practice.[38]

In Denis's film Chocolate (1988) we see the colonial structures named via the characters (France, Protée and Aimée); interrogated (the unresolved passion that develops between Protée and Aimée, the clear hypocrisy of the colonial code examined via the illuminating and dubious proclamation of Luc); and questioned and challenged (via France's burnt hand, Protée's rejection of Aimée). Yet, there is no final resolution to the conflicts, in France and William J Park's respective failed acts of return (to the land of her childhood and his heritage), we see failed and incomplete process of homecoming. The film refuses to allow us to go back to the past and we instead see "the struggle, if not the impossibility, of re-inscribing the self into that

dislocated space and the impossibility of re-inventing a narrative and myth (of reclaiming a memory)."[39]

A similar notion of re-inscribing the self into a space that has changed beyond recognition is a struggle that Ozu's characters frequently face in the post-war moment. Noriko's traditional commitments to her widowed father in Late Spring (1949) results in him being forced to commit a hurtful deception to encourage her to marry and leave him. Tokyo Twilight (Tokyo boshoku, 1957) follows the traumas of a family in disharmony, unable to find peace within themselves or with each other. The parade of failed marriages and unwanted pregnancies that the film revolves around ultimately flags up the gradual disintegration of the family unit. Although, the lead character Takako decides to give her marriage another attempt, it is for the sake of her daughter rather than any real desire to repair the relationship. Take Tokyo Story (Tokyo monogatari, 1953). The tension between the rise of the modern moment and the pre-war social structures shown results in the alienation of two generations of a family. This narrative would be seen again in An Autumn Afternoon (Sanma no aji, 1962) and here the ending becomes even more pertinent. After he has managed to marry off all his daughters, the elderly patriarch sits alone musing the past and the gap that exists between the generations. In his traditional western wedding suit he goes into a bar and requests a neat whisky. As he sits, the bartender puts on for him the Battle Hymn of the Republic and the men in the bar begin to recite from memory the notification of defeat with a wry humour, "so we lost', 'yes we did!." The camera them moves in a series of ellipses from the light in the bar, to Hirayama's tired, face, the sign outside the bar, to the corridor of his house and finally to the table where his children are sat. As the camera moves back, the children leave and Hirayama is left alone and drunkenly begins to sing the words of the battleship march. The sense of

emptiness and dislocation that the camera provides in the vision of the empty house, from the viewpoint of various corridors and rooms, highlights the feelings of lose that song and his daughter's marriage have provoked in Hirayama. In the final scenes of Hirayama standing alone crying and pouring himself a drink, he is mourning the loss via marriage of his daughter, that much is clear, but the interplay of music and image give feeling to a much wider sense of lose of this older generation for their place in society. For Yoshida Kiju, this acting in this scene is "too nonsensical or silly to portray nostalgia for the war,"[40] yet, combined with the visual elements it is hard to not read pathos into the interplay between the loss of a daughter and the loss of, if not Empire per se, a previous sense of collectivity and togetherness. There remains an attachment to this past that continues to impact the present.

Laurent Berlant's approach to affect is relevant here, who states "cruel optimism is the condition of maintaining an attachment to a problematic object"[41] and the cruel optimism of the post-war period is perhaps the inability to move beyond its structures in a truly meaningful way. The aesthetics of the cinematic movement is caught in the process. Throughout Denis's Beau Travail, we see the group of Foreign Legion soldiers enact their training on the landscape, unable to return to the past of the colonial glory of France, and yet unable to find a place in the postcolonial present. Optimism persists, even if cruel and unyielding, since the loss of the objects' promise? carries the possibility of total destabilisation.[42] The Foreign Legionnaires remain attached to their routines, their songs, their uniforms and their camaraderie. This affective response is perhaps at the heart of a notion of a postcolonial aesthetic. Berlant points to a way out of this synconistic pattern in the ability to recognise and be open to disruptive encounters. Although in Berlant's world this does not allow alternative schemes of attachment to develop and present a way out of this cruel

optimism, the moment of disruption is perhaps more powerful than she allows. Disruption is ultimately a way of generating knowledge as we can perhaps see "productive tensions arising from incommensurate differences rather than deceptive reconciliation".[43]

In a similar way, the disruptive moment of the act of prostitution in Hen in the Wind will become the catalyst for a familial crisis that will, eventually be resolved with both parties being forced to consider their actions and the social events that surround and constrain them. The closing scenes in the film, although offering a moment of narrative's reconciliation, also visually continue a narrative of disruption. We see the couple embrace in their home and the woman's hands tightly clasped in a prayer position behind her husbands back with her fingers intertwined. The film then cuts to the gas station with the levels raised to near full, as the camera moves away from this station we cut to the children playing in the street followed by another cut to people walking towards the gas station, which is empty this time.

INSERT IMAGES 1, 2 and 4 here.

Fig 1, 2, 3: The images offer a sense of fracture beyond the narrative reconciliation

This empty gas tank and the ending of the film, not on the couple but on a street where the citizens are only just visible beside the large empty structure raises a sense of unease and confusion as the seemingly happy family reconciliation is undermined in the fractured and inconclusive ending.

Disruption such as presented at the ending of Hen in the Wind is constant throughout the films of both Ozu and Denis. Following Nietszche's Zarathustra, who points out that the greatest events are not always the noisiest but sometimes the

quietest moments,[44] the work of Ozu focuses on the minutia of day-to-day life to expound the wider events. A process of aesthetic remembrance is formed via the focusing on the minutia of daily life that speaks to both "it rests on the place for the sensate life on individual experience within the broad sweep of categories as the incommensurate and unknown that art yet seeks to imitate".[45] In Tokyo Story, the shrine of Shukichi and Tomi's deceased son Shoji is clearly prominent in the home of their daughter-in-law Noriko and this physical remembrance acts inside the film as a symbol for the loss that the family has undergone and has yet to endure. As Tomi comments when she goes to stay with Noriko "I did not expect to sleep on the futon of my son," and this sentimental statement can perhaps be read as Tomi's own sense of mortality and soon to occur death. The framing of subsequent scenes further enhances this where Tomi sits underneath her son's portrait as Noriko hands her the small allowance. Tomi then moves to stare directly at her son's picture.

INSERT Fig 4 here

Fig 4: Tomi stares at her deceased son's image.

Memory continues to be a constant motif in Ozu's work and of course can be read in a variety of ways, not just related to the postcolonial. Yet, as it relates to aesthetics, the process of memory and more specifically memory as a site of rupture and return is present in both the work of Denis and Ozu and can be seen as a marker of an engagement in the postcolonial moment (although not exclusively since as previously stated the aim is not to engage in discussion of genre but rather of possibility). This constant process of return and rupture engaged the viewing in a process of affective response to the images on the screen. As Janet Wilson states in Rerouting the

Postcolonial, affect signals the turning "from identity politics to subjectivity itself."[46] Affect is about placing the body at the centre of discourse since affect proceeds from the body and inbetweeness of bodily interaction.[47] Thus, in Tokyo Story we see the living memory of the dead son/husband as the affective linkage not only between Noriko and Tomi but also between the post-war and the war time period.

This inbetweeness of action is a key point of reference in two closely interlinked films Ozu's Late Spring and Denis's homage to this film 35 Shots of Rum (35 Rhums, 2008). The narratives of the films are very comparable; a close and loving father-daughter relationship (Professor Somiya/Noriko and Lionel/Josephine) respectively) is forever altered when the father realizes that he needs to allow his daughter to embark on a life of her own. Via the faking of his own desire to remarry he encourages her to take a husband. Where the films differ is the sense of sadness that is clear at the end of Late Spring is given a more positive spin in 35 Shots of Rum. The famous noh theatre scene in Late Spring, where Noriko realizes with muted but highly visible sadness that her father plans to remarry, is replaced by a similar exchange of slow looks and emotion crosscut between the two in 35 Shots of Rum as the main characters retire to a late-night café after the car has broken down[48]. However, rather than the sorrow of Noriko we have the sexuality of Josephine's developing feelings for the upstairs neighbor Noe shown alongside her familial love for her father Lionel. When taken together with the very different stylistic elements, the films endings also promote a very different emotional tone. While in Late Spring the father sits alone and unhappy as his daughter has entered into an unwilling marriage, in 35 Shots of Rum, we see a potentially positive move towards change and development. The father's decision to down the titular 35 shots of rum is open to debate as an act of celebration or an act of sorrow but the sense of movement is clear. As the guests

dance behind him, rather than the lonely drinking of Professor Somiya accompanied only by Noriko's friend Aya, we see a social situation that allows him to gain comfort from those who support him. As he says a "moment like this only happens once, so, 35 shots of rum." The rum becomes a symbol of the act of unknowing in a similar fashion to the rice cookers that feature throughout the film. At the opening we see both father and daughter buy a new rice cooker and, once she realizes her father has bought one the daughter hides hers. At films conclusion sees Lionel unwraps the previously hidden rice cooker and place it side by side with the one already standing on the kitchen counter. The rum and the rice cooker remain floating symbols in that no specific meaning is allocated to them inside the film text but they instead operate as an affective site of emotive significance. As Sedgwich comment, "affects can be, and are, attached to things, people, ideas, sensations, relations, activities, ambitions, institutions, and any number of other things, including other affects. Thus one can be excited by anger, disgusted by shame, or surprised by joy."[49]

Both films focus on the minutia of the father-daughter experience to grant an affective experience that creates a simultaneous sense of the imminent, the past and the potentially disruptive. In Late Spring, the end shots of Somiya, peeling an apple and bowing his head in sorrow as the camera switches to a sweeping shot of the dark sea render a sense of loss that is painful for the viewer to watch. Ozu's skill as a director, like Denis's lies in the ability to allow the audience to develop an affective relationship to the images on the screen that goes beyond the narrative structures. This affective relationship allows for what Boehmer states is not only a "remapping but also a re-vision" it allows for the postcolonial to be found "not in language but rather of language."[50]

## Conclusion

It would be reductive and impossible to posit an exact definition and illustration of a postcolonial aesthetic via the work of two filmmakers. Both aesthetic and postcolonial are terms that require constant renegotiation and readjustment in their construction, approach and application. However, seeing the post-colonial aesthetic as situated as an affective part of the film language allows for the debate to open up further in an examination of the interplay between the two terms and their cinematic rendering. In their cinemas of the ultimately unknowable, both Denis and Ozu engage beyond dominant representational politics towards a new mode of understanding the colonial past. Whether this is a positive or a negative engagement; whether this is a desire to return to the colonial moment or a need to interrogate the postcolonial space; or simply a nostalgic examination of the past, the works of Denis and Ozu engage beyond dominant representational politics towards a new mode of understanding the colonial past and the postcolonial present.

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[1] Ramon H Myers and Mark R. Peattie, The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945. (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 6.

[2] See Robert Davis, "Interview: Claire Denis on 35 Shots of Run", Daily Plastic, March 10th, 2009. Accessed 13th September 2015. http://www.dailyplastic.com/2009/03/interview-claire-denis-on-35-shots-of-rum/ Although Denis has articulated how 35 Shots of Rum was deeply inspired by Late Spring, the homage elements of the works are not the main focus of this essay. Therefore I have chosen to focus on films that articulate Denis's more specific

engagement with the colonial and postcolonial moment such as White Materials and Beau Travail.

[3] Immanuel Kant, The Critique of Judgement, 2nd, revised ed., trans.J.H. Bernard (London: Macmillan, 1914).

[4] Emory Elliot, Aesthetics in a Multicultural Age (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3

[5] Jerry Farber, 'What is Literature? What is Art? Integrating Essence and History'' The Journal of Aesthetic Education, 39: 3(2005): 1-21, 2.

[6] Alan Goldman, "The Aesthetic" in The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics 1st Edition, ed. Berys Gaut and Dominic Mclver Lopes (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 200.

[7] Theodor Adorno, "The Schema of Mass Culture" in The Culture Industry, ed. J.M. Bernstein (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 63-64.

[8] Elleke Boehmer, "A Postcolonial Aesthetic: Repeating upon the Present" in Rerouting the Postcolonial: New Directions for the New Millennium, ed. Janet Wilson, Cristina Şandru and Sarah Lawson Welsh (London: Routledge, 2010), 170-81, 172.

[9] Kaja Silverman, The Threshold of the Visible World (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

[10] Silverman, Threshold, 4.

[11] Silverman, Threshold, 186.

[12] Inge. E. Boer, After Orientalism: Critical Entanglements, Productive Looks (Netherlands: Rodopi, 2004), 12.

[13] Alan Shapiro, In Praise of the Impure Poetry and the Ethical Imagination: Essays, 1980-1991 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 11.

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[15] Alexandra Schultheis, Regenerative Fictions: Post colonialism, Psychoanalysis and the Nation as Family (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2004), 41.

[16] Boehmer, A Postcolonial Aesthetic, 175.

[17] See Sandra Ponzanesi and Marguerite Waller, eds.. Postcolonial Cinema Studies (London and New York: Routledge, 2012) and Rebecca Weaver-Hightower and Peter Hulme, eds. Postcolonial Film: History, Empire, Resistance (London and New York: Routledge, 2014)

[18] The Japanese Empire was both colonial and imperial in nature. For example Manchuria was imperial rather than colonial when compared to territories such as Korea and Taiwan.

[19] Herbert Marcuse. Counterrevolution and Revolt (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), 81.

[20] Barry. M. Katz, "The Liberation of Art and the Art of Liberations: The Aesthetics of Hubert Marcuse," in The Aesthetics of the Critical Theorists: Studies on Benjamin, Adorno, Marcuse and Habermans, ed. Ronald Roblin (Lewistown N.Y: Edwin Mellen, 1990), 52-187, 182.

[21] Marcuse, Counterrevolution, xi, 6.

[22] Laura McMahon, Cinema and Contact: The Withdrawal of Touch in Nancy, Bresson, Duras and Denis (Oxford: Legenda, 2012),114.

[23] Homi. K Bhabha, The Location of Culture (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 1-2.

[24] Paul Schrader, Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer (New York: Da Capo Press, 1988) and Noël Burch, To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in Japanese Cinema (California: University of California Press, year)

[25] Donald Richie quoted in Jonathan Rosenbaum, Building from Ground Zero: A Hen in the Wind, written for BFI DVD release of the film. Accessed 22nd September 2014. http://www.jonathanrosenbaum.net/2011/02/building-fron-ground-zero-a-hen-in-the-wind-tk/

[26] Hasumi Shigehiko, Director Ozu Yasujiro [Kantoku Ozu Yasujiro] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo: 1987), 63.

[27] Sato Tadao, The Art of Ozu Yasujiro [Ozu Yasujiro no Geijutsu] (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1971), 107-13.

[28] This is a direct case of mistranslation as the Japanese title read Nagaya shinshiroku (perhaps best read as "Who's Who of the Tenements"). However, this is main title the film now goes under in the global market so I will continue to refer to the film as this.

[29] Edward Fowler. "Piss and Run: Or how Ozu does a number on SCAP" in Word and Image in Japanese Cinema ed. by Carole Cavanaugh and Dennis Washburn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 272-292, 278

[30] Fowler, "Piss and Run," 278.

[31] For a summary of all the various debates see Abe Mark Nornes, The Riddle of the Vase, Ozu Yasujiro Late Spring (1949) in in Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts, ed. Julian Stringer and Alastair Phillips (New York: Routledge, 2007), 78-89

[32] Martine Beugnet and Jane Sillars "Beau Travail: Time, Space and Myths of Identity," Studies in French Cinema 1.3 (2001): 166-173.

[33] Susan Hayward, "Claire Denis's Films and the Post-Colonial Body," Studies In French Cinema 1.3 (2001): 159-165.

[34] Janet Bergstrom, "Opacity in the Films of Claire Denis," in French Civilisation and its Discontents ed. Tyler Stovall and Georges Van den Abbeele (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2003), 69-102, 71.

[35] George M Wilson, Narrative in Light: Studies in Cinematic Point of View (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 54.

[36] Simone Bignall, Postcolonial Agency: Critique and Constructivism (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 3.

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[39] Hayward, *Claire Denis's Films and the Post*-Colonial Body, 161.

[40] Yoshida Kiju, *Ozu's Anti*-Cinema trans. Daisuke Miyao and Kyoko Hirano (Michigan: Centre for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2003), 141.

[41] Laurent Berlant, Cruel Optimism (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 33.

[42] Berlant, Cruel Optimism, 33.

[43] Gulsum Baydar Nalbantoglue and Wong Chong Thai, eds. Postcolonial Space(s) (New Jearsey: Princeton Architectural Press: 1997), 8.

[44] Friedrich Nietzsche. Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Translated by Graham Parkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 169.

[45] Deepika Bahri, Native Intelligence: Aesthetics, Politics and Postcolonial Literature (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 220.

[46] Janet Wilson, Cristina Şandru and Sarah Lawson Welsh, eds. Rerouting the Postcolonial: New Directions for the New Millennium (London: Routledge, 2010), 6.

[47] Mike Featherstone, "Body Image and affect in consumer culture," Body and Society 16.1 (2010): 193-221.

[48] The café sequence also highlights an additional element that is missing from Late Spring, the question of ethnicity. The ethnicity of Lionel/Josephine also points towards a postcolonial present founded on movement and flux and elements and the interplay between the minority communities of France (as represented by Lionel/Josephine and their wider group of friends, work colleagues and acquaintances) and the wider French society is referenced throughout the film.

[49] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 19.

[50] Boehmer, A Postcolonial Aesthetic, 170, 180.