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Bodies in the Dark: The Postwar Cinema Audience and the Body as 'Ground Zero'

Jennifer Coates

Film scholars and historians have long recognized the centrality of the medium of film to the Allied Occupation (1945-1952) reform agenda. Using rigorous pre- and post-production censorship, the offices of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (hereafter SCAP) attempted to shape film content to encourage radical social change. Bodies featured as a kind of ground zero for post-war reform: as the legal position of many citizens, particularly women, changed critically with the ratification of the 1947 Constitution of Japan, bodies marked by gender, class, and race, came to signify in new ways.

But what of actual bodies in the cinema? Sitting in dark theaters receiving carefully crafted and censored film content, how was the audience member's body positioned, and what impact did this positioning have on how film narratives shaped audiences' presentations of their bodies, and their bodily performances? This chapter draws from an ethno-historical investigation of Japanese film reception to demonstrate how physical access to and interaction within the cinema theatre shaped the transmission of post-war film content, and thereby impacted on the bodily practices of the post-war cinema audience. Four years of ethnographic research including interviews, questionnaires, and participant observation with Kansai residents who attended the cinema regularly in the early post-war era suggests that from changing sartorial fashions to new mannerisms and public behaviors, cinema content certainly shaped post-war Japanese bodies. Yet considering the audience member as body also reveals the limits of cinema as a tool for reforming a mass public in the wake of defeat.

Body Discourse and Cinema

Early cultural critics including Edogawa Rampo and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō recognized the impact of cinema on the body of the viewer. Edogawa described the cinema as a mode of bringing images “closer and closer to spectators, such that optical distance gives way to tactile proximity . . . so close that perception gives way to a shock to the body” (Edogawa trans. LaMarre 2005, 110). From its earliest arrival in Japan, cinema was understood as a physical mode of communication. As rapidly militarizing social discourse began to focus on the body of the nation state however, bodily and sexualized narratives in film were suppressed by pro-Imperial censorship, and the audience was conceptualized as a political mass rather than a group of individual bodies transported by cinematic affect.

Body discourse re-entered the cinema in the early post-war era as writers and filmmakers responded to author Sakaguchi Angō's influential *Discourse on Decadence* (*Darakuron*, 1946), which advocated decadence as a means to rediscover a Japanese self. Tamura Taijirō, author of *Gate of Flesh* (*Nikutai no mon*, 1947), which was adapted into a popular stage play and two popular films (1949; 1964), wrote of the truth and honesty of *nikutai*, or the flesh, in contrast to *kokutai*, or the national spirit, regarded with suspicion after the defeat of Imperial Japan in 1945 (Coates 2016, 127). Post-war discourses on decadence and a return to the body and its pleasures became widespread throughout the popular presses as many Japanese citizens came to experience the end of the war as a liberation from wartime regulations on physical conduct, dress, and interactions (Igarashi 2000, 53). Yet while these discourses were often celebratory in tone, Douglas Slaymaker warns that we must be wary of reading the *nikutai* genre as a free expression of post-war decadence and liberation, as its life-affirming focus on the physical and its pleasures

was expressed through, and often at the expense of, the female body (Slaymaker 2004), in cinema as well as literature. The *nikutai* boom was to prove problematic in this aspect in the later 1960s and 1970s, as it was developed into the *pinku* genre of soft-pornography made cheaply and plentifully in the last years of the Japanese film studio system.

Contemporary film scholars have also grappled with issues of the body in relation to Japanese cinema content and star discourse (Gerow 2006; Raine 2001; Raine 2003; Saito 2010; Saito 2015; Shamoan 2009). While Wimal Dissanayake argues that “one thing that cinema in the hands of gifted filmmakers can do extremely well, is to capture the nuanced experiences and complex responses of the human body” (1990, 48), Mitsuyo Wada Marciano reminds us that the “gifted filmmakers” recognized outside Japan often deal in representations of “ethnicized” bodies. Wada Marciano argues for a better understanding of how “this modern ethnic body/self has been historically constructed, as well as an acknowledgement of how its meanings have changed across time and for different audiences” (2007, 181). This chapter offers an ethno-historical account of the post-war audience under Occupation as a group of embodied individuals consuming film content focused on ethnicized bodies, to better understand how the audience-as-body relates to images of bodies on screen.

Going to the Cinema in Post-War Japan

The offices of SCAP, headed by General Douglas MacArthur, explicitly positioned the cinema as a means to change audience behaviours and ideologies in everyday life. Cinema content was developed under strict information dissemination and censorship guidelines, with the goal of fundamentally reforming the Japanese way of living. Beginning the Occupation of Japan

on 2 September 1945, SCAP quickly circulated the Memorandum Concerning Elimination of Japanese Government Control of the Motion Picture Industry on 16 October 1945 (Hirano 1992, 39), indicating that the Japanese film industry was to play an important role in the Occupation from an early stage. The cinema was imagined as a means to educate and “reorient” Japanese viewers away from pre-war and wartime attitudes perceived as feudal or vulnerable to fascist interpretation (Kitamura 2010, 42). Information section personnel instructed Japanese filmmakers in the kind of content understood by the Occupiers to be desirable, assessing synopses and screenplays, before final film prints were censored or suppressed.

In the first years of the Occupation, SCAP personnel were proactive in encouraging the production of films that reflected the Allied Occupation’s democratic agenda. The Motion Picture division of the Civil Information and Education Section (hereafter CIE) checked synopses, screenplays, and filming plans, while the Civil Censorship Detachment (hereafter CCD) examined prints. Finished products were often sent back to the studios for cuts or reworking. SCAP even attempted to formulate a hypothetical “typical” post-war media audience member known as “Moe-san” (Mayo 1984, 303). Moe-san was a composite of information gathered by Allied intelligence personnel and researchers during and immediately after the war. Based on their understanding of wartime schooling and social indoctrination, Occupation personnel attempted to predict Moe-san’s reaction to the media of the post-war period, with the intention of influencing the ideal audiences’ “democratization” through this same media. Moe-san was “a typical citizen” (Mayo 1984, 303) who had completed around eight years of primary school and had basic literary skills. Moe-san had been successfully sold militarism, and could therefore be successfully introduced to democratic principles through the same media (Mayo 1984, 303). The cinema audience imagined as an ever-increasing mass of Moe-sans was in this

way a kind of ground zero for new ideologies of living, thinking, and being. Yet while the Occupation forces addressed the mental and educational capacities of these millions of Moe-sans coming to the cinema, the physical realities of these bodies cramming into theatres is less readily apparent in SCAP documentation on film cultures and practices.

Before television, which arrived in Japan as a commercial product in 1953, and did not reach saturation until 1958, the cinema was certainly one of the most convenient means of communicating the Occupation agenda to large numbers of people. There was significant popular demand for film products, as audiences in newly defeated Japan embraced the cinema as a means of escape from the harsh realities of the poverty and uncertainty of the early Occupation years. The popularity of film grew rapidly from 1945, culminating in a peak admissions rate of more than one billion viewers in 1958 (Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan, 2017). Interviewees recall the era as one “without many entertainments” (Koyama 2016), and the cinema is remembered as the major attraction for young children in particular, in comparison to radio broadcasts and reading materials. In this sense, bodies in the cinema constituted an impressionable audience for SCAP’s message of change.

First on the list of SCAP reforms was demilitarization, quickly followed by democratization. By October 1945, equal rights for women were included in a list of five priority reforms to be enforced by the occupation. By May 1947, these reforms were enshrined in the post-war Constitution, and filmmakers were advised to include characters and narratives that reflected the new post-war social order in a positive light. Occupation personnel took an active role in translating the new Constitution for the film industry. For example, the head of the Motion Picture and Theatrical branch of the CIE, David Conde, encouraged studios to present a positive image of women on film, and banned the production of films which “deal with or

approve the subjugation or degradation of women” (Freiberg 1992, 101). SCAP influence over film content continued until June 1949, when regulation was handed over to the Motion Picture Code of Ethics Committee (Eiga Rinri Kitei Kanri Iinkai, abbreviated to Eirin), a self-regulating organization modeled on the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (later the MPAA).

While both SCAP and Eirin focused on the minds of audiences, which they imagined to be easily influenced by film content, it should be noted that the expected outcome of this influence included changes to, on, or in, the viewers’ bodies. Audiences were encouraged to move, dress, and present their bodies in new ways by the models provided on screen. From an increase in active young female character types, who ran, jumped, and laughed in uninhibited fashion (Coates 2016, 113-119), to models of modern romance encouraging kissing as a new post-war practice (McLelland 2010), film stars demonstrated new ways of using one’s body for the post-war era. Bodies were also re-shaped and remodeled by changing fashions, as audiences mimicked the styling choices of their favorite stars. Dancing, romantic behaviors, seduction, and physical freedom could be seen on screen for the first time since the Film Law of 1939, which had sought to bring popular cinema in line with increasingly restrictive propaganda and behavioral codes of militarizing Japan. Ethno-historical and memory studies research methods reveal that many audiences members recall having adapted their bodies in response, but not always as authorities had expected. Before offering some ethnographic accounts of bodily experiences in the cinema, and of film encounters, the next section presents an account of the methods of the study that generated this material.

Approaching the Audience: Research Methods

The ethnographic material presented below is drawn from a larger study that blends interviews with film viewers with material from a long-form questionnaire project involving 82 respondents, a number of letters and emails on memories of cinema-going, and participant observation at several cinemas and film groups specializing in retrospective screenings of post-war films. Participants in the larger study attended the cinema with varying degrees of regularity between 1945 and 1975: for the purposes of exploring audiences' bodily responses to cinema in the early post-war, only memories related to the period 1945-1964 have been included here. The larger number of participants grew up in the Kansai region of Western Japan and their viewership experiences are specific to the area, however a small number also mentioned visits to cinemas in Tokyo and in the Kyushu area. All data has been anonymised using pseudonyms.

In applying discourse analysis to ethnographic materials including viewer-produced letters, questionnaires, and interviews, this study follows key works in the field of audience and reception studies (Radway 1984; Ang 1985; Stacey 1994; Kuhn 2002). Adapting these British Cultural Studies-informed methods to Japanese Film Studies is not an attempt to force an Anglo-European model onto the Japanese context, but rather an opportunity to revisit an earlier moment in Japanese-language studies of film and popular culture. Gonda Yasunosuke's *The Foundations of Popular Entertainment (Minshū goraku no kicho, 1922)* in many ways foreshadowed British Cultural Studies in its account of audiences as members of a new class generated by the growth of capitalism (Fujiki 2014, 78). Gonda criticized other theorists for not engaging with the everyday realities of "the people" (Fujiki 2014, 80), realities that must include embodied experience and aspirations to re-fashion the body. Gonda's were among the first audience surveys in Japan, positing the viewer as "the subject of culture" and the film as a text in which spectators could "insert their everyday emotions and ideas" (Gerow 2010, 40). He suggested that

“viewers’ selves are projected out [*tobidasu*] because of their work with the photoplay to turn the flat into the three-dimensional, an unconscious but difficult task” (Gerow 2010, 41). In Gonda’s model, the cinema becomes a means by which the viewer can both develop a sense of self, and send that self out into the world. In *The Principles and Applications of the Moving Pictures*, Gonda’s viewer-self (*jiko*) is “active” and relatively independent, a point he illustrates with the bodily example of film audiences crying individually at different moments during a screening, while he supposes that a theatre audience would cry all together at the same moment (Gonda 1914, 415). Yet Gonda’s conceptualization of the viewer as a bodily self soon gave way to the popular idea of the audience as a group that could be educated in the national ideals of militarizing Japan through cinema propaganda. For this reason among others, many scholars including Gonda moved away from the now-politicized study of mass culture and group behaviours.

Japanese researchers continued the development of audience studies after the war, with the introduction of television and information behaviour studies (*jōhō kōdo*), part of a theory of information society (*jōhō shakai*), translated from American communication studies (Takahashi 2016, 59). Drawing from effects theories, uses and gratifications research, and advertising market research, Japanese scholars applied translated questionnaires in common use in American communications studies to Japanese audiences. These studies were generally restricted to home viewing and interpreted comparatively in relation to the US (Takahashi 2016, 60). Toshie Takahashi notes that claims about Japanese collectivism and a desire to prove “particularities of Japaneseness” dominate this era and body of work (Takahashi 2016, 61), and bodily responses do not feature to any great degree.

Engaging with television viewers in their own homes through recorded interviews and participant observation, Takahashi's 2016 study is one of the first ethnographic accounts of Japanese viewership practices to be published in English. While Takahashi's argument in some ways harks back to the claims of Japanese uniqueness that she identifies in post-war uses and gratifications studies, her use of ethnographic methods is highly original in the Japanese media studies context, and contains in-depth information about physical aspects of television viewership. While recent Japanese-language and Anglophone film studies have once again become interested in the question of the Japanese cinema audience, path-breaking work such as Fujiki Hideaki's *Kankyaku e no apurōchi (Approaching the Audience, 2011)* and *Eiga kankyaku to wa nanimono ka: media to shakai shutai no kin-gendaishi (Who is the Cinema Audience?: A History of Media and Social Subjects, 2019)*, as well as Hiroshi Kitamura's studies of post-war Japanese viewership of Hollywood films (2017) have so far taken an archival approach. My study aims to bring the voices of viewers of the post-war era back into this discussion, following Takahashi's participant observation model to include an account of physical bodily sensations and cinema, both in remembered anecdotes and in contemporary practice.

I began research for this study with two years of participant observation at the retrospective screening programs held at the Kyoto Bunka Hakubutsukan (Kyoto Culture Museum), known locally as the Bunpaku. This large museum is situated on Sanjō Street, just off Karasuma Street in central Kyoto. On the third floor, a film theatre with a capacity of 180 seats hosts two daily screenings at 1:30pm and 6:30pm. Themed programs run for around one month, focusing on Japanese studio films made between 1910 and 1980. Each film is repeated four times in a single week, twice per day on two days, three days apart. Tickets are comparatively cheap at

500 yen for non-members and 400 yen for members, or 4000 yen for a yearly pass (a commercial cinema ticket would be closer to 2000 yen for one screening). After two years of participant observation, I conducted a questionnaire survey at the Bunpaku film theatre, gathering 82 responses. I then generated interview questions from the recurring themes emerging from the questionnaire responses, and filmed interviews with volunteers from the group of questionnaire respondents. I have conducted informal interviews with a further 20 participants on a recurring basis, both in groups and individually.

I also practiced participant observation at a number of retrospective film screening programs in cinema and public spaces across Kansai. For eighteen months, I attended monthly meetings of film circles and discussion groups managed and attended by Kansai residents between the ages of 70 and 95, as well as a number of meetings and events that were not specifically film-related, including an English conversation group and a monthly lecture and dinner party for Kyoto University alumni. This hybrid ethnographic method was designed to achieve a balanced survey that includes participants of both sexes and casual viewers as well as committed film fans. The combination of formal and informal interviews with participant observation was designed to balance verbally communicated information about past viewing practices, including accounts of bodily experience and body-related memories, with visual observations about contemporary cinema-going practices among the now-elderly audiences of post-war cinema.

Embodied Audiences: Inside the Film Theatre

Cinema theatres in early post-war Japan were organized into three tiers; first tier cinemas were the most expensive and showed the most recent films. The second and third tier cinemas showed less recent films, often in shabbier settings and using second-hand or recycled prints and older equipment. These theatres were cheaper and popular with children and young families. In the Kansai region, first-run and “roadshow” theatres were few: Kyoto had the Yasaka Kaikan, Kobe the ABC, and Osaka the Sennichimae (Terasawa 2010, 164). In the early years after the war, a number of cinemas were destroyed or badly damaged by bombing and fire. Yet the city of Kyoto alone had as many as 60 theatres by the period 1947-1956 (Katō 1996), so the choice was not limited in the second half of the Occupation, except by the time and money available to the viewer. As the accounts of cinema-going in this section demonstrate, these factors correlate with age, gender, and social class, as well as geographical location.

The choices on offer ranged from the modern and well-designed film theatres advertising heating or cooling technologies (depending on the season) to the more basic theatres located in less stylish parts of town or in the suburbs. Interviewee Takeda-san recalled, “As I had no money, I went to the second and third tier cinemas, the ones in the run-down areas (*basue*), and those in the suburbs” (2016). While the up-to-date theatres described by Katō Mikiro in Kyoto city centre (1996) may have boasted cutting edge facilities, from new films to up-to-date projectors and air conditioning, participants in my research project indicate that these theatres were reserved for special treats or one-off film events. Family trips to the film theatre involving children as young as four were generally limited to the second- and third-tier theatres, while the only questionnaire respondent whose first cinema encounter occurred in an up-market city centre cinema was also the oldest, aged nineteen on her first visit. Access to and behaviour in the cinema was circumscribed by this three-tier system.

The attempt to improve and modernize the film theatres was charted by local Kansai newspapers, which individual theatres used to communicate with their audiences about improvements and new rules. For example, in 1947 the Asahi Kaikan in Kyoto announced in a local newspaper that from May of the same year the “stuffing system” (*tsumekomi shiki*) that had seen popular screenings filled to standing capacity would be replaced by a “capacity limit, one showing” system (Katō 1996). Due to audience dissatisfaction, this was replaced in the next year with a substitution system whereby a patron leaving before the end of the screening gave the empty seat to an arriving patron, who could remain in the theatre for the next screening of the same film. Interviewees and questionnaire respondents reported that such systems created a “*manin*” or packed atmosphere, which was not necessarily disagreeable, but could be physically uncomfortable in terms of lack of space and in terms of the sounds, smells, and physical movements of proximate bodies.

Until 1948, the Yasaka Grand was the only first-run theatre in Kyoto, and had a degree of flexibility in audience arrangements as it was in high demand. The Yasaka Grand introduced the first seat reservation system in Kyoto in 1947, which allowed viewers to sit together with their companions. In the cheaper second- and third- run cinemas, viewers were packed in with little regard to who had arrived together. For this reason, a number of female study participants recalled feeling physically unsafe in dark film theatres in their younger years, leading to bodily tension as a part of the cinema going experience. Yet the more elegant theatres were restricted for those without significant disposable income. In the early post-war years, superior cinemas in Kyoto charged 25 or 30 yen, in comparison to the 20-yen tickets available at the second-tier cinemas.

The majority of interviewees remembered visiting the cheaper Cineplex-style buildings where a number of small third-tier venues were crowded together inside a single structure. Younger male audience members recall adapting their bodies or physical appearances to gain entrance to these cinemas. For example, Matsushita-san remembered a female cinema attendant advising him to remove the cap of his high school uniform before purchasing his tickets for a Catherine Deneuve film he had decided to skip school in order to see (Matsushita 2018). Changes in physical behaviours also allowed for free cinema access, as many male interviewees recalled entering the cinema without paying by claiming to have an urgent message for a friend inside the theatre (Kishida 2016). In these instances, physical performances of urgency granted young male bodies free entry to screenings. Whether changing the arrangement of clothing to appear older, or changing the arrangement of facial features to look like a person on an urgent mission, the act of entering the cinema theatre schooled bodies in new performances.

Gender, age, class, and geographical location informed which bodies had access to the cinema, when, and how. Women who brought children to the cinema with them often recalled being forced to leave the theatre by the behaviours and demands of their children or younger siblings. A significant number of younger viewers, both male and female, remembered forcing an older female relative to leave the cinema theatre, or miss key moments of a film, by crying, shouting, or otherwise behaving in a manner that necessitated the intervention of a mother, sister, or aunt. Both older women and their younger children and siblings recalled the feelings of shame and embarrassment experienced by the women on these occasions, attributed to an awareness that other audience members were watching the child's misbehaviour. Hashimoto-san remembered his elder sister complaining about his conduct at a screening of *Boyhood* (*Shōnenki*, Kinoshita Keisuke) in 1951; "... the soldiers marched out... when I saw it I cried a lot. When we

got back home, I remember that my sister told everyone, ‘He caused me some amount of trouble!’” In this account, Hashimoto san’s emotional physical response to the tragic war narrative caused trouble for his sister, as she worried about being held responsible for the disruption to other audience members’ viewing experience.

A number of interviewees commented on the unsuitable nature of much film content for younger children, whether excessively sad, scary, or sexual (Takeda 2016). At this time, many cinemas had no restrictions on what kinds of film children could see, and a number of participants in my study recalled being brought to see films that they later understood to be directed at adult viewers. Access for children was limited according to the rules of cinema-going in a particular area, and parental interest in cinema. While Imai-san remembered children being forbidden to enter certain cinemas alone in 1946 in Shiga prefecture (Imai 2016), Takeda-san recalled his film fan mother bringing him to the cinema often to see adult as well as children’s films (Takeda 2016). According to these accounts, the cinema theatre was not the space of enforced quiet we know today, but rather filled with the physical expressions of many bodies, including those of screaming or crying children, some hiding under front row benches. Others recall running in the aisles due to boredom during longer or adult-themed films (Kishida 2016).

Bodily movements of other natures also caused disruption in the theatres. Several questionnaire respondents recalled the dirtier atmospheres of post-war cinemas, noting the change in cinema culture from the Occupation era to the present. One questionnaire respondent remembered, “In those days the film theatres weren’t so beautiful (*utsukushikunai*). Now they look like hotels!” Many interviewees and questionnaire respondents mentioned the unpleasant smell of the cheap seats near the toilets. Yamashita-san recalled, “The smell was terrible!” (*nioi*

ga kusai!) (2016). The bodily presence of so many audience members crammed together in one space made itself known in a number of sensory ways; visible, audible, tactile, and olfactory.

Matsushita-san and Kishida-san both recalled the enormous amounts of smoke produced by cigarette-smoking audiences, often creating a haze so thick that those seated in the back seats could barely see the screen (Matsushita 2018; Kishida 2016). A public discussion on the issue of poor ventilation in cinemas was raised by a Department of Public Health survey and published in the *Kyoto Shinbun* newspaper in May 1952 (Katō 1996), suggesting that the problem was widely recognized. The Central Motion Picture Exchange (CMPE) did attempt to force cinemas that screened US films to adhere to a higher standard of hygiene, threatening to withdraw American films from non-compliant theatres (Kitamura 2010, 116). Yet there does not appear to have been significant interventions in theatres screening primarily Japanese films. This division further entrenched the post-war sense of America and the Allied nations as clean and orderly, set against a dirty, poor, and physically disorderly Japan. It also seems odd that after carefully crafting and censoring the content of Occupation era cinema, more was not done to ensure that viewers could watch films in peace.

Yet the cinemas maintained a strong attraction (*miriyoku*) for most of the participants in this study. To a great degree, this attraction was premised on the romance of cinema narratives, and in the early post-war era, on the availability of sexual themes and sexualized imagery unavailable to earlier audiences under Imperial censorship. Romance of a particularly bodily nature entered the theatres in both film content, and audience reactions and interpersonal behaviour. These aspects were connected, as is clearly demonstrated by Matsushita san's account of his reaction to the figure of Catherine Deneuve. While registering his admiration for her

physical beauty, he notes that he felt his response to her appearance in his own body, specifically as a feeling in his chest (*mune*) (Matsushita 2018).

It must be noted that none of the participants in this study willingly brought up the topic of romantic interactions with other audience members during film screenings, and I was wary of addressing the issue. Annette Kuhn notes that in her study of 1930s cinema attendance in Britain, only one male interlocutor addressed the topic uninvited (2002, 138). Yet the establishment of the cinema as central to modern dating behaviours suggests that cinema culture did play a part in fostering the new post-war ideal of the romantic couple as an equal partnership. In Kurosawa Akira's *One Wonderful Sunday* (*Subarashiki nichiyōbi*, 1947) a character even mentions the cinema as a “cheap date” and an opportunity for young men and women to share some time together, away from the demands of work and family.

Cinema-going as a dating practice neatly brings together the audience-as-body with the display of bodies on screen. This is particularly notable in accounts of couples viewing sex-related film content. A 1950 article on “The state of couples in the movie theater” related that couples in the cinema often responded physically when a scene with “sex appeal” (*sei teki appiiru*) appeared on screen. Such scenes are described as including “dialogue containing the words ‘I love (*ai*) you,’ ‘I like (*suki*) you,’ ‘marriage,’ ‘body,’ and ‘pregnancy,’” or scenes including “a kiss or some other physical resolution” (Fukuoka 1950, 165). Fukuoka reports observing couples kissing or interacting physically with one another during these scenes, while other audience members called out commentary. In this way physical behaviors and bodily themes onscreen appear to have influenced or triggered the physical behaviors of audience members.

Shaping the Body: Cinema Influence on Dress and Mannerisms

A number of Occupation personnel and US citizens visiting Japan reported that films, particularly imported Hollywood features, appeared to have made a significant impression on Japanese audiences. Lucy Herndon Crockett, an American resident in Japan, remembered a Japanese woman sharing her impression that in American imported films, “men’s behavior to women is especially refined” and that “these things are now influencing our social life” (1949, 205). Indeed, Crockett also recollected a Kyoto University student telling her that “he and his friends learn from the American pictures how to light a cigarette for a girl, hold her coat, open a door for her” (1949, 204), indicating that the content of American cinema influenced the physical behaviors of some young viewers.

Wada Marciano reminds us that “Once filmed, a body ceases to be anonymous, but becomes instead the body of a particular star, carrying with it specific connotations and cultural values” (2007, 183). The connotations and cultural values inscribed on the bodies of the post-war era’s major stars informed their influence on viewers’ bodies and behaviors. A number of American, British, and Japanese stars were marketed as role models for Japanese viewers. Under Occupation era censorship, these stars were required to conform to SCAP-mandated social ideals. For example, Hara Setsuko has been described as a “standard bearer” (*kishu*) for humanism (Yomota 2000, 9) and a “goddess” (*megami*) of the CIE’s “democratic enlightenment” program (Yomota 2000, 154) due to the number of SCAP-compliant roles she performed on screen. Hara had in fact been a wartime child star, but was rehabilitated in the post-war era by Kurosawa Akira’s humanist *No Regrets for Our Youth* (*Waga seishun ni kuinashi*, 1946). She came to stand out among popular Japanese actresses as a new type of woman, mainly due to her insistence on

her independence, and her refusal to marry. While critics hailed Hara as a new kind of female star, academics have considered the possibility that she may have been one of the first queer stars of the Japanese cinema (Kanno 2011). Viewers' opinions were divided, from those who considered her appearance and career to epitomize modern cosmopolitan femininity, to viewers and critics who record a distinctly ambivalent response to her independent public persona.

Even young female viewers who considered Hara a successful modern woman struggled to consider her a practical role model. Interviewee Koyama-san articulated this difficulty in these terms:

Hara Setsuko was so beautiful, and she had so many male fans. I thought she certainly wasn't like other girls... She really had a lot of male fans. But I always felt, how would you put it, she was a bit above everything. Maybe there were people like that in real life, you know, well, kind of closing their hearts (*kokoro ni shimatte*) and living out their whole lives alone. I thought, "Well, I guess there is also that kind of way to live" [*sō iu ikikata mo arun da nā to omoimashita*].

(Koyama 2016)

Koyama-san was not alone in her memories of Hara Setsuko as an aspirational star. True to her observation, the majority of participants who praised Hara in interviews and questionnaires were male. Yet a number of female participants recalled being strongly influenced by Hara's performances.

One participant who chose as her pseudonym the English name Elizabeth, recalled copying Hara's smile in the mirror, and attempting to mimic her laugh (Elizabeth 2016). It is worth returning to Wada Marciano's argument about the "ethnicizing" of Japanese star bodies

here, as Elizabeth was the only participant in the study to include English language material as well as Japanese in her questionnaire response, despite growing up in Japan. Wada Marciano argues that the discourse of the body as it reoccurs in Japanese popular culture “often hing[es] upon this sense of a somehow ‘belated’ or ‘unfulfilled’ condition of Japanese modernity” (2007, 186). Positioning the ethnicized body evident in star discourses “within the politics of Japanese modernity responding to an idealized West,” Wada Marciano argues that “uses of the female ethnicized body, in particular, carry a distinct postcolonial view” (2007, 186). While this postcolonial view in Wada Marciano’s writing results in “an expression of a reified, provisional modernity” through the representational practices applied to female bodies in late 1960s cinema, it seems unlikely that female audiences would have aspired to the provisional modernity of the ethnicized star during the Occupation and its immediate aftermath. Instead, Hara stands in many aspects as a corrective to this ethnicized Japanese female star body. Fans and critics often speculated that Hara was not entirely Japanese, and rumors of her Russian or German ancestry were only heightened by her breakout role in the German-Japanese co-production *The New Earth* (*Atarashiki tsuchi/ Die Tochter des Samurai*, Itami Mansaku and Arnold Fanck, 1937). Hara was positioned as an imagined traditional feminine ideal, at the same time possessing ethnic qualities associated with the Anglo-European beauty ideals of the post-war era, and with the idealized “West” understood as superior to defeated Japan.

Elizabeth’s use of an English name and certain English phrases indicated an interest in or sense of affinity with the language and culture of the “idealized West.” It therefore seems fitting that Elizabeth would indicate some identification with Hara’s public persona, inflected with non-Japanese characteristics. Her physical attempts to mimic Hara were connected to her embrace of Anglophone expressions in writing, demonstrating a link between bodily performance and

intellectual interests and passions. Yet while Elizabeth prized Hara's exoticism, she recalled reproducing only those behaviors understood as attractive in a highly traditional gendered sense, such as a graceful smile or laugh.

While it may have been possible to copy Hara's mannerisms and style, the "way of living" that Koyama-san refers to above may have been harder for a woman in post-war Japan to emulate. Hara famously never married, and often publically chided reporters for the gossip and industry presses who quizzed her on her romantic life. Some critics and scholars speculate that like Greta Garbo, to whom she was often likened, Hara may not have been entirely heterosexual (Kanno 2011). Others suggest that she had a life-long love for the director Ozu Yasujirō, with whom she worked on some of her most famous films including the "Noriko trilogy" *Late Spring* (*Banshun*, 1949), *Early Summer* (*Bakushū*, 1951), and *Tokyo Story* (*Tokyo monogatari*, 1953). Hara retired after the director died in 1963, and became a reclusive figure in the Kamakura area outside Tokyo, though one study participant claimed to have seen her walking in the streets around the area. Despite the new independence women gained in legal terms after the ratification of the post-war Constitution in 1947, with its acknowledgement of equal rights within marriage, it would nonetheless have been very difficult to live as Hara Setsuko had, and women of the era seem to have recognized this, despite the aspirational SCAP propaganda embedded in popular film texts. Hara's star persona and onscreen characters suggested an alternative way to live for a number of young viewers growing up in the golden age of Japanese cinema, yet Koyama-san phrased this realization as "so there is also that kind of way to live," suggesting that this alternative appeared more hypothetical than realistically attainable, or perhaps even desirable.

While Koyama-san and Elizabeth's recollections depict an ambivalent response to Hara's physicality and lifestyle, many female audience members adopted the star's Western fashions.

Off-screen as well as on, the Occupation period was a period of intensive material cultural exchange, as the large number of American servicemen involved in the Occupation brought with them a mass of material culture unrivalled even by the influx of Anglo-European trends in the interwar period. From luxury goods traded for favors, to the clandestine exchange of materials for black-market sale, the early post-war years saw a flurry of imported trends and materials from the U.S. From 1945, “traditional patterns of clothing and materials were considered to encapsulate pre-war attitudes and were discredited under the guise of education and modernisation” (Armstrong 2011, 222). Peter Armstrong argues that in Japan and Germany, imported items “possessed a spurious attraction by dislocation with the past” (Armstrong 2011, 222). Wearing such items could also dislocate the body from past associations of restriction and trauma.

As the Occupation stabilized, soldiers brought over American family members who contributed to this exchange of products, fashions, and behaviours (de Matos 2007). For example, the wives of British and Australian servicemen, as well as their more dominant U.S. counterparts, produced pamphlets describing how to perform domestic duties in the American, Australian, or British home, intended for use by their domestic “helpers” assigned by their husband’s military employers. These pamphlets found wider distribution after the end of the Occupation and were incorporated into the role of the post-war *senkyō shufu*, or professional housewife.

Anglophone women also commented on Japanese adoption of Western dress, and issued advice on wearing American, Australian, and British clothing. For example, Australian Maida Williams penned the following excoriating account of her own role in the Anglo-European influence on post-war Japanese women’s dress.

Unashamedly intrigued by this foreign woman [Williams], they lifted her skirt to see how the seams were sewn, they smelled her scarf, they studied her hair and head from several angles, and said what they thought in conversation with each other and with her. Fortunately I couldn't understand much, but behaved as I thought a film star would in those circumstances, remembering how much the Japanese girl had absorbed of Western culture from the film, and how keen she was of absorbing a great deal more. They wore our type clothes but they haven't quite got the slant on how to wear them, and go clattering off down the street on their noisy awkward geta, hatless, gloveless, stockingless, wondering why they lack the finish and the carriage! No one could have any carriage, it seems to me, when four wooden stilts tied to your feet by your big toe push your stomach alternately in and out." (Quoted in Coaldrake 2003, 302)

Williams recalled her response to the Japanese women's physical investigation of her clothing and its arrangement as mimicking a "film star." In this aspect, Williams and her curious interlocutors are not too different, as a large number of Japanese viewers also recalled copying film stars' clothing and mannerisms in their efforts to adapt to the new circumstances of the Occupation. Yet Williams depicts the final results of her influence on Japanese women as unsuccessful, in that their attempts to replicate Anglo-European dress and gait ultimately fail to faithfully reproduce the original (as she sees it). Despite the influence of film stars on fashion, the post-war Japanese body was not sufficiently reformed to impress many of the Occupiers. In such anecdotes, we can see the body positioned at the centre of "the politics of Japanese modernity responding to an idealized West" (Wada Marciano 2007, 186).

While we rarely see depictions of Anglo-European and American servicemen in Japanese entertainment films or magazines before 1952, Anglo-European beauty ideals were dominant in post-war cultural production. Despite an insistence on openness and freedom in personal conduct as a basis for re-making Japan in the North American democratic capitalist mode, the offices of SCAP committed to a programme of secrecy and invisibility where the Occupation forces were concerned. Imported materials including American and British films conveyed an image of a wealthy, fashionable world outside Japan, crafting an aspirational image which took precedence in Japanese cultural products as the popular press and film studios were reorganized and began production. The first post-war Japanese actress to appear on the cover of a major film magazine was Kishi Keiko for *Kinema Junpō* in 1954: from 1945, Hollywood actresses had dominated the covers of film magazines and fashion magazines alike, though the publications themselves contained detailed information on Japanese cultural productions and events as well as Anglo-European and Hollywood-informed beauty news.

The bodies of female film stars, analysed and judged in the popular magazines of the era, became a kind of front line on which the merits and disadvantages of Anglo-European or Japanese fashions and beauty were discussed. Of course, American and Anglo-European trends influenced Japanese fashion and beauty ideals in the pre-war 1920s, particularly in popular discourse around the cinema. While discourse on 1920s “Westernization” in Japan did acknowledge an element of perceived inferiority to the source cultures, post-war Anglo-European and American influence on Japanese body ideals was particularly loaded in the context of defeat and Occupation. Issues of perceived inferiority in comparison to an idealized West made the task of dressing the body somewhat fraught; while the Anglo-European fashions

modelled by film stars were aspirational, the ridicule meted out to those who wore them “incorrectly” was excruciating, as demonstrated by William’s patronising account above.

Non-Japanese commentators were not the only offenders in this respect. In the booming print media, critics and gossip columnists were the judges of star bodies and fashions. For example, Hara Setsuko and Tanaka Kinuyo, the two biggest stars of the post-war era, were regularly mentioned in articles critiquing the dress of high-profile stars. In the fashion and gossip press surrounding film culture, Tanaka was ridiculed for her “lack of style” in choosing Western clothing, while Hara was described as “a Western dress person” (Tsukamoto 1947, 44). Tanaka and Hara were the targets of a similarly critical article in *Eiga Goraku* in April 1948, which argued that they had no *iroke*, or sex appeal (Matsubara 1948, 13). Critic Matsubara Ichirō connects this to their wearing of western dress, claiming that actresses who suit Japanese dress, such as Yamada Isuzu and Mito Mitsuko have “masses of *iroke*”. In this way, the delicate negotiations between the respective images of a re-imagined post-war Japan and an imagined “West” played out on the star body.

The associations of Anglo-European fashions and beauty as opposed to Japanese were not simplistic or binary. Western fashions and hairstyles were alternately modern, business-like, and sexualized, while kimono alternately invoked tradition and sex appeal. In contrast to Matsubara’s argument about *iroke*, many film texts and star profiles used Japanese kimono as a kind of visual short-hand for character values such as “traditional,” “modest,” and “virtuous.” For example, in an “at home” interview for film magazine *Eiga Fan* in 1949, ex-child star Takamine Mieko took interviewers on a tour of her home to demonstrate how her star persona had developed from cute girl star to refined woman (Sanada 1949, 6-7). The large pictures of her tasteful home emphasised her aesthetic qualities, including a portrait of Takamine in kimono,

sitting demurely in her tatami mat room. The interviewer emphasised her beauty, refinement, and dress sense in her choice of kimono matching the home furnishings. She was described as a “longed-for” (*akogare no sutā*) and “sympathetic” star (*kyōkan o yobaseru sutā*) (Sanada 1949, 6-7), an ideal example of post-war Japanese womanhood. Alongside the boom in Western fashions and physical behaviours, there was a recurrent interest in re-positioning Japanese national dress and its associated bodily postures as similarly aspirational and refined.

Conclusion: Can Bodies Be Reformed by Cinema?

This chapter has been a tale of two kinds of bodies at the cinema; those in the theatre, and those on screen. While the bodies on screen were carefully crafted and censored to comply with SCAP’s reform agenda, the bodies in the cinema were less predictable. Messy, noisy, smelly, or rowdy, the cinema audience consisted of attentive bodies, enraptured bodies, bodies behaving badly, and bodies appearing where they should not be. In this respect ethnographic methods are essential to understanding the relation between bodies and cinema, as without audience members’ accounts and recollections of bodies in the theatre, we would only have SCAP’s version of the story, based on the hypothetical Moe-san and his entirely conceptual responses to censored film content. By listening to the audience, we can instead compose a more nuanced picture of the post-war viewer at the cinema.

Considering the audience member as body reveals the limits of cinema as a tool for re-forming a mass public in the wake of defeat. Yet audience memories also detail the great degree to which cinema did re-make the body in particular circumstances in post-war Japan, teaching viewers new mannerisms and practices, as well as new ways of dressing and styling the body.

Some new mannerisms were fairly radical, such as those used for dating, a new phenomenon in the post-war era. Others were less so, particularly those related to performing attractive and idealized femininities, which tended towards the gender-normative and heteronormative. It may never have been possible to return the post-war body to the ground zero imagined by SCAP, Angō, and Tamura. But audiences at the cinema certainly learned to layer a significant number of new styles and habits over the post-war Japanese bodies they brought to the theatre.

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