Book Section:

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Creativity at the Margins in The 'Golden Age' of Japanese Cinema (1945-1965)

We often think of popular cinema as one of the more accessible creative arts. But where is this creativity located, and how is creativity fostered or suppressed within the cinema industry, particularly in the formative 'golden age' studio system? For creativity to exist within the creative industries, an industry or workplace must allow that creativity to develop. While some forms of creativity are explicitly supported in financial, material, and motivational terms, others are inadvertently blocked, deliberately suppressed, or lack encouragement. In such instances, creativity in the creative industries can take on different forms. For example, finding a way to work in an unsupportive workplace, or with limited funds, is an exercise in creativity. This kind of creativity exists not only within the industry workplace, but also at its margins. Making space to produce creative work can include rhetorically invoking or physically inhabiting roles and spaces outside the creative industry in question, for example, in the domestic sphere. Taking the postwar Japanese cinema industry as a case study, this chapter explores how individuals pushed to the margins of the studio system took creative measures to increase their own creative capacities.

Strictly censored by the Allied Occupation forces, and with a constant eye on the financial bottom line, the postwar Japanese film industry was not a free creative space. Directors and actors were restricted by exclusive long-term contracts with the dominant studios, enforced by inter-studio cooperation that prevented anyone who broke contract with one studio being employed by another. Studio executives relied on the popular press to both promote and discipline actors and directors. So where was space for creativity located in the postwar Japanese studio system? This chapter

explores the marginalization and subsequent creative triumphs of director Ichikawa Kon (1915-2008) and star Kogure Michiyo (1918-1990) to demonstrate how creative strategies for overcoming bureaucratic studio obstacles developed in unusual places, including the gossip press, the advertisement industry, and the domestic sphere. Understanding creativity in the 'golden age' of Japanese cinema as a response to industrial, economic, and bureaucratic restrictions in the production of a final creative product, we can better understand what creativity entails.

Making films in postwar Japan

Based on the name, we might expect the second 'golden age' of Japanese cinema to be a peak point of creativity. The period 1945-1965 saw rapidly growing audience numbers, peaking in 1958. Audience attendance was calculated at 733 million (rounded to the nearest million) in 1946, increasing by 3.2 per cent in 1947, 1.7 per cent in 1948 and 3.7 per cent in 1949, and surpassing one billion in 1957 (Izbicki 1997: 46). The number of cinema theatres increased steadily year on year before peaking at 7,457 in 1960. The cinema industry was supported and funded by a dedicated mass audience without many competing attractions, and enjoyed a diverse range of exhibition opportunities.

Audiences watched both domestic and imported film content in the new cinema theatres of the postwar era. During the Occupation of Japan (1945-1952), the offices of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (hereafter SCAP) controlled the import of foreign films to Japan, with a heavy bias for American Hollywood productions (Terasawa 2010: 55). In the early years after defeat, as the domestic film industry recuperated, almost half the films screened in Japan were not created at home. In 1946, thirty-nine American films, five foreign films of non-

American origin (all imported before the war) and sixty-seven Japanese films were screened. By 1950 foreign imports had risen to 185, 133 of which were American. A new quota system was introduced in the same year to cap foreign imports based on the number of films from a particular country shown over the previous ten years. After the control of foreign film importation was given over to the Japanese government in 1951, the percentage of foreign films released in Japan declined from 52.7 per cent to 40.7 per cent between 1951 and 1952 (Terasawa 2010: 56). In 1955, 514 Japanese films were released, accounting for 65.8 per cent of all films screened in commercial cinemas, while by 1960 the percentage of domestic productions screened had risen to 78.3 per cent. Occupation era import laws and the post-occupation cap on foreign imports further supported the well-attended Japanese cinema by decreasing competition from international film industry products.

At the same time however, Occupation era cinema content was heavily censored. The offices of SCAP, headed by General Douglas MacArthur, explicitly positioned the cinema as a means to change the attitudes of the general public, large numbers of who were now in cinema theatres. Cinema content was developed under strict information dissemination and censorship guidelines. After 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 the importance to the Occupiers of placing the cinema industry under new controls (Kitamura 2010: 42). SCAP 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 sent back to the studios for cuts or reworking. SCAP even attempted to formulate a hypothetical 'typical' postwar media audience member known as Moe-san (Mayo 1984: 303). Moe-san was a composite of information gathered by Allied intelligence 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 postwar period, with the intention of influencing the ideal audiences' 'democratization' through this same media (Mayo 1984: 303).

Removing Home Ministry controls after 1945, SCAP encouraged major studios Tōhō, Shōchiku, and Daiei to resume production as soon as possible (Kitamura 2010: 43). Smaller studios were merged; for example, the 1947 merger of Tōyoko Eiga, Ōizumi Eiga, and distribution company Tokyo Eiga Haikyū created Tōei studios. Formally established in 1951, Tōei was known as "the production factory of the popular" (*tsūzoku no seizō kōjō*) (Standish 2005: 272), indicating the large output and competitive over-production encouraged of the major studios. Yet the actual creative production inside the studio system was strictly controlled. SCAP was invested in turning the Japanese studios into productive powerhouses, but not necessarily creative ones.

Nonetheless, the studio system managed to produce not only popular entertainment films, but also the classics that won Japanese cinema's first international awards. Japanese films came to dominate the international film festival

scene in the early postwar era, winning a significant number of awards at European film festivals during the 1950s, as well as at US award ceremonies. Path-breaker Kurosawa Akira received numerous awards for *Rashomon* (*Rashōmon*, 1950) including the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 1951 and the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1952. Gosho Heinosuke's *Where Chimneys Are Seen* (*Entotsu no mieru basho*, 1953) won acclaim at the 3rd Berlin International Film Festival. Kurosawa's *Ikiru* (1952) and Ōzu Yasujirō's *Tokyo Story* (*Tokyo monogatari*, 1953) competed at the 4th Berlin International Film Festival in 1954, while Mizoguchi Kenji won the Silver Bear at the Venice Film Festival for *Tale of Ugetsu* (*Ugetsu monogatari*, 1953). *Gate of Hell* (*Jigokumon*, Kinugasa Teinosuke, 1953), the first Japanese colour film to have an international release, received an Oscar in 1954 for Best Costume Design (Wada Sanzo) and an Honorary Award for Best Foreign Language Film. *Gate of Hell* was also the first Japanese film to win the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in the same year. Inagaki Hiroshi won an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film for Part I of his *Samurai* trilogy (*Miyamoto Musashi*, 1954) in 1955, and Ichikawa Kon's *The Burmese Harp* (*Buruma no tategoto,* 1956) was nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards. Inagaki also received the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival for *Rickshaw Man* (*Muhōmatsu no issho*, 1957) in 1958. Kobayashi Masaki's *Kwaidan* (*Kaidan,* 1965) was awarded the Special Jury Prize at Cannes and nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards, and Teshigahara's *Woman in the Dunes* (*Suna no onna,* 1964) won the Special Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, and was nominated for Oscars for the Best Director and Best Foreign Language Film. Given this commercial and artistic success, we could reasonably assume the major studios to be hotbeds of creativity. Yet looking more closely at the social, political,

legal, and structural constraints imposed on key groups of creatives such as directors, scriptwriters, producers, and actors, the picture becomes more complicated. Where exactly was creativity located in this restricted world, and what were its limits?

Restrictions on creativity within the studio system

The new postwar studios remained vertically integrated, developing film content in-house with teams of staff contracted to the studios, and exhibiting new films in studio-owned theatres before renting them out to the second- and third-run cinemas that charged lower entrance fees and showed older films. When a studio produced a popular film, the profits went straight back into the studio, but when a film lost money at the box office, the cost was borne by the studio. In the early postwar era of rationing when raw materials, including film stock, were in short supply, a studio could lose a lot of money very quickly due to the vertical integration model. For this reason, the box office performance of a film was of ultimate importance to the studio heads, and directors such as Ichikawa Kon were penalized for making films that failed to earn big box office receipts. Studio personnel monitored film content, style, and casting with an eye on the bottom line.

The Allied Occupation bureaucracy imposed second and third levels of restriction by censoring film content both before and after production. CIE officers would meet with studio personnel to review planned film projects, striking out any elements on a pre-circulated list of banned topics which included direct mention of the Occupation itself, as well as sympathetic depiction of Japan's war effort, defeat, or Imperial ideology. CIE personnel exhorted filmmakers to include preferred topics, themes, and characterizations at the planning stages of a new film. Policy documents such as the Political Information-Education Program prepared by the CIE in June

1948 called for all media branches to coordinate in an effort to make Japanese audiences aware of the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizens (Tsuchiya 2002: 196). The document advised liaising directly with Japanese film producers to persuade them to include material and themes related to the political education of the Japanese populace. In November, this document was developed into a 158-page book titled *Information Programs*, designed as reference material for all CIE officers (National Archives II at College Park, Maryland, RG 331, GHQ/SCAP, CIE, Box 5305, file 12 and 15). When a film had been shot and edited, the CCD then removed any material violating the censor's code.

Films were expected to educate their viewers as to how a modern, postwar, democratic life should be lived. Central to this agenda was gender equality, a goal SCAP identified with the destruction of perceived 'feudal' attitudes in Japan. To this end, the Allied bureaucracy instructed Beate Sirota Gordon and others to write the 'gender equal' Article 24 for the 1947 Constitution. Filmmakers were commanded to create strong democratic female characterizations and stories, in an attempt to use the aspirational power of cinema to make the new gender ideals into reality. Cinephile David Conde, head of the Motion Picture and Theatrical branch of the CIE until July 1946, 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). Conde instructed filmmakers to avoid confining women to domestic familial roles "considering their newly upgraded social status" (Hirano 1992: 149). Studios and scriptwriters were encouraged to produce narratives and imagery that depicted emancipated Japanese women as aspirational and instances of female subservience were deleted from film scripts (Kitamura 2010: 60). SCAP influence over film content continued until June 1949, when the Motion Picture Code

of Ethics Committee (*Eiga Rinri Kitei Kanri Iinkai*), a self-regulating organization modeled on the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (later the MPAA) took over. By then, certain elements of studio infrastructure mandated by SCAP had become standard, such as the hiring of large numbers of female actors to meet SCAP's demand for female leading roles. In this way, SCAP ideological goals influenced the material structure and staffing of the Japanese studio system, and this influence outlasted the Occupation itself in several aspects.

The actor as creative: working in the postwar studio system

The postwar studio system controlled not only the production and distribution of films in Japan (subject to SCAP approval), but also determined to an extent which actors could star in particular films. The heads of the major studios participated in a monopoly agreement that held each studio to a collective promise not to employ stars that had left other major studios within a set period of time. This agreement allowed the major studios to build big-budget productions around star personae, but the monopoly also served the interests of some stars, as a budding star persona could be based around the 'persona' of the studio. Young stars at Nikkatsu, for example, formed their public personae around the showy and nihilistic aura of the *taiyōzoku* 'sun tribe' film genre, while Ozu Yasujirō's gentle home dramas for Shōchiku cast a classic nostalgia over their stars.

Competitive overproduction created a demand for new stars, and at the same time, studios that had focused on male-centric war epics until 1945 were suddenly faced with a mass of new censor-mandated roles for women, and few actresses to take them on. In response, the studios developed recruitment drives such as the New Faces search, which became a public event in which young actors were chosen from open

auditions and from the choruses of review shows and the popular Takarazuka Opera. Creating public star-searches that doubled as publicity stunts, the major studios hired a large number of actresses over the first four years of the Occupation. When censorship was handed over to the Film Ethics Regulation Control Committee in June 1949 (effectively becoming industry self-censorship), the predominance of female roles continued for a number of years despite a decreased political focus on gender equality due to the large number of actresses contracted to each studio.

Much like the Hollywood studio system, the Japanese studio system strictly forbade contracted staff to work with other studios, unless hired out by their home studio. Major stars were in such high demand that studios could refuse to lend them, while an unpopular or low-earning performer could be hired out, or dropped from their contract. Studios controlled an actor's means of self-publicization by managing journalists' access to stars, and used the industry and gossip press to promote or discipline actors. Though a major star could survive an attack from the gossip press, the public personae of less popular stars could be seriously damaged by bad publicity.

Personal creative power was largely dependent on audience following; while bankable stars had a degree of creative freedom, choosing and shaping acting roles and even taking on directorial projects, less popular stars were at the mercy of their studio. Popularity, power, and independence were closely connected. Sufficient popularity and artistic renown allowed actors to make bold career moves unavailable to those considered less valuable within the studio system. High profile actors could even test the studio's monopoly agreements to move between studios. In 1956, Hidari Sachiko moved from Shin-Tōhō to Nikkatsu, Minamida Yōko moved from Daiei to Nikkatsu, and Kitahara Mie from Shōchiku to Nikkatsu. All three converted their popularity and box office earning power into the freedom to choose their creative

environment. Hidari even became Japan's third female director, directing an episode of the ensemble film *Hot Pants* (*L'Amour Au Féminin*, Jean-Gabriel Albicocco, Thomas Fantl, Hidari Sachiko) in 1971 before planning, producing, and directing *The Far Road* (*Toi ippon no michi*) in 1977.

Prizes such as leading parts and greater independence within the studio system were offset by horror stories about unlucky actors cast out from or abused by the studio system, published in the popular gossip press (Coates 2016: 40). In extreme cases magazines even reported cases of death from neglect and overwork at the lowest ends of the star spectrum (Anon. 1947: 53). Stars were disciplined both through the vertical hierarchies of the studio system and by the popular press to understand greater popularity as greater earning power, and therefore greater success, resulting in increased freedom, compensation, and opportunity. On the other hand, failures lead to public shame and potential financial and physical ruin. In the competitive environment of the film industry, actors had to get creative about self-presentation in order to convert their skills and popularity into the earning power that bought creative freedom.

Creative career strategies: the case of Kogure Michiyo

In 1947, actress Kogure Michiyo became a target of the gossip press when the *Eiga bunko* (*Film Library*) magazine's gossip column "Star Record" (*Sutā toroku*) took aim at her work/ life balance (Anon. 1947:15). An anonymous columnist expressed snarky concern about how Kogure balanced her domestic roles with her career. "As a housewife and mother, how does she keep up home life and her life as an actress without failing in either?" (*Katei no shufu de ari, ko no haha de aru kanajo ga, katei seikatsu to joyū seikatsu to o ika ni hatan naku ikinukō ka*) (Anon. 1947:15). Kogure

was a moderately popular actress, a style icon for women and something of a sex symbol for male critics, who appreciated her "sex appeal" (*iroke*) (Matsubara 1948: 13). Within the studio system however, negative public perceptions of one's domestic arrangements and off-screen life could cost an actress valuable fans, and thereby box office bankability.

Kogure attempted to create a more coherent onscreen/off-screen persona by penning a small personal advice column in *Eiga Fan* (*Film Fan*) magazine titled "The Key to My Life as a Housewife" (Kogure 1949: 33). Her advice is carefully crafted to support key aspects of her onscreen star persona, shaped by warm comedic supporting roles such as Umetaro, the friendly local geisha of *Blue Mountains* (*Aoi sanmyaku*, Imai Tadashi, 1949).

> You should lovingly depend on your husband [*otto ni amaeru*] and make use of women's gentle nature [*yasashisa*] to make harmony in the home. Getting a little silly in the home is the secret to housewife life I think [*ie no naka de wa dekiru dake baka ni natte iru koto ga shufu seikatsu no hiketsu de wa nai ka to omoimasu*]. When I'm alone in the house I like to do childish foolish things [*baka*], like play "Catch ball." You should take time apart from your husband sometimes [*tokidoki otto to hanareru*]. We are separated due to work, so thanks to this everyday is like a honeymoon [*shinkon*]! Housewife life keeps you in beautiful health [*shufu seikatsu wa utsukushiku kenkō*]. (Kogue 1949: 33)

Kogure's account of her home life mirrors her onscreen persona in the inclusion of anecdotes about playing childish physical games, repeating playful actions she was often seen performing on film. Her appeal to woman's "gentle nature" positions the reader, imagined as female, in the same category as Kogure. Positioning the reader in

intimate relation to the star in this way was highly seductive, as the glamour of Kogure's star persona was reflected onto the reader by way of her claim to a shared experience. Kogure fosters this intimate affect with phrases such as "when I'm alone" and "the key [or secret, *hiketsu*] to my life," which imply that the reader is a privileged observer to the private aspects of her off-screen 'real' life. This could encourage warm sympathetic feeling towards the actress, and an enjoyable sense of inclusion.

While Kogure addresses the reader as a fellow home-maker, she also speaks from a position of authority, both as a famous and wealthy star and as an advice columnist. Her description of "getting a little silly" and "time apart" would appear to acknowledge a need for relief from the pressures of the housewife role, however she nonetheless makes the standard association between housework and women's "natural" abilities in her advice to readers to use their "gentle nature" to make the home harmonious. Devoting one's energies to making the home a nurturing space for others is positioned as beneficial to the housewife, and even glamorous, in the claim that "housework keeps you in beautiful health." Kogure creatively balances the relatable everyday concerns of a woman working in the home with the seductive affect of the glamorous film star.

Its important to note that Kogure's depiction of the stay-at-home housewife lifestyle is also aspirational. Though the popular press followed SCAP's lead in championing the stay-at-home wife and mother as the ideal modern, emancipated woman, few nuclear families could afford to leave half the workforce at home (Uno 1993: 303; Liddle and Nakajima 2000: 175). Kogure downplays her non-household-related work in her writing (though the writing itself is an example of this kind of work), referencing outside employment only in positive relation to its impact on her

home life; for example, being apart during working hours is credited (*sono okage de*) with improving her marital relationship. Kogure obfuscates the fact that *both* she and her husband work outside the home, making it possible for the reader to interpret her advice in the context of the idealized housewife waiting for her husband to return home. The reader was implicitly encouraged to believe Kogure's housework was her whole work experience, even though this was clearly not the case.

Kogure's ultra-domestic, ultra-feminine re-creation of her star persona aligns her with SCAP's socio-political agenda, while selling her 'just one of the girls' persona to audiences primed by censor-shaped popular press content to recognize her domestic life as the postwar female ideal. By blending Occupation-compliant imagery with relatable beliefs and humour, Kogure fashioned a star persona that proved convenient for a studio system caught between meeting censors' demands and attempting to increase fan loyalty and thereby box-office commerce. Shōchiku studio soon promoted Kogure to her first leading role in Ozu Yasujirō's ground-breaking divorce comedy, *The Flavour of Green Tea Over Rice* (*Ochazuke no aji*, 1952). Sanyo Electric also hired Kogure to play "Mrs Sanyo" in a long-running advertising campaign that emphasized the connection between household electrical appliances and an American way of life (Yoshimi 1999: 158). Kogure's reward for her creative response to the disciplining and gender-conservative gossip press was increasing work opportunities, fame, and money, paradoxically achieved by posing in the gossip press as a devoted housewife.

Locating creativity: work vs. family

We could say that Kogure leveraged her family life to achieve greater freedom and power in her workplace. In creating her housewife advice column, she was not only

able to take hold of the narrative around her star persona. She could also channel public attention towards herself, and build a dedicated audience base by appealing to her everyday qualities, while simultaneously using the glamour of the film industry to charm the everyday reader. To increase her creative power at work, she built a public persona around her role in the home. In the consumerist hierarchy of the vertically integrated studio system, money was power, and big box office sales made money. For female-focused home dramas of the type in which Kogure appealed, box office sales were made on the strength of star appeal as much as on the reputation of the director. The word choice and positioning of the author suggests that Kogure created her advice column to directly appeal to female readers, building her fan base and increasing her box office appeal for the demographic most likely to have been the readership of the gossip magazines which had previously criticized her. This approach certainly convinced Shōchiku and Sanyo, who hired her on a more prominent basis thereafter.

Of course, actors were not the only creative workers under pressure in the postwar studio system. Like Kogure, director Ichikawa Kon's frequent battles with the studios were mediated through public representations of his married life. Studios were reluctant to waste the in-house training received by directors in the era before films schools, and often signed young men graduating from assistant director to director roles to long-term exclusive contracts. For this reason, the studios often penalized rather than fired unsuccessful directors, assigning them salvage operations on pre-purchased text adaptations, or vehicles for contracted actors. Thanks to his wife, respected scenarist Wada Natto, Ichikawa was able to turn such impossible projects into creative successes; Audie Bock characterizes their professional relationship as the "reliance" of the director on the scenario writer (Bock 2001: 40).

When Ichikawa was assigned to direct *An Actor's Revenge* (*Yukinojo henge*) as punishment for a series of box office failures by Daiei studio (Ichikawa 2001: 301), Wada stepped in to help, and public discourse on their romantic partnership became part of the legend of this creative success.

A screenwriter's revenge: besting the studio system

After disappointing box office returns on a string of literary adaptations including *Conflagration* (*Enjō*, 1958) and *Odd Obsession* (*Kagi*, 1959), Daiei Studios instructed Ichikawa to re-make Kinugasa Teinosuke's *Revenge of a Kabuki Actor*, a 30-year-old silent film that had lain in storage for years (McDonald 1994: 145). The film had been the biggest box office hit in the history of Japanese cinema in 1935, and starred Hasegawa Kazuo, then preparing to make his 300th film with Daiei. Studio personnel decreed that *An Actor's Revenge* would be that film, and that Ichikawa would direct it.

To add insult to injury, the director was required to use the studio's new DaieiScope format, which he resisted to no avail (Ichikawa 2001: 303). *An Actor's Revenge* has clearly not been lavished with expense, with clunky cardboard scenery and aging matinee idol Hasegawa Kazuo in not one but two roles, playing both a loveable thief and an *onnagata*, or female role actor. Through stylized camerawork, clever casting, and ironic use of the tacky set however, Ichikawa created a stylishly camp story of mis-read lesbian romance wrapped up in a crime caper. This new reading of an old film depended largely on a dramatically re-written script.

Wada amped up the dialogue, making the comedic most of Hasegawa's hopelessly deep voice, now quite unsuitable for the performance of female roles due to his advanced age. Ichikawa drew from this core absurdity at the heart of the film by adding a visual counterpart to the requirement for theatrical suspension of disbelief on

the part of the audience and other cast members. He treated the widescreen DaieiScope as a very modern stage, sending actors on and off the edges. The backgrounds of key scenes are often simply blacked out, lending a Brechtian simplicity to monologues while covering for sparse or missing settings, props, and extras. Ichikawa and Wada updated the second-hand narrative for the 1960s by turning weak dialogue into surreal farce, an aging star into a camp event, and minimal scenery, props, and lighting into an avant-garde style statement. The innovations of Ichikawa's film, as well as its sheer audacity and unique visual style have earned it a place in the golden age canon, perhaps even more popular overseas than at home.

The story of Wada and Ichikawa's collaboration is as long lasting as the legacy of the bizarre success of *An Actor's Revenge*. Unlike Kogure, who introduced her family life into her professional persona to appeal to the readership of her advice column, Wada and Ichikawa were creative collaborators before they were family members, marrying in 1948 after meeting at Tōhō studio, where she was working as an interpreter. Under the pen name Wada Natto, Mogi Yumiko, later Ichikawa Yumiko, wrote a great number of film scripts, including 30 for Ichikawa Kon.

Ichikawa regularly made a point of noting her imprint on finished films. For example, continuity assistant Nogami Teruyo recalls Ichikawa vocally insisting that Wada had "such an ear for dialogue" while on set (Nogami 2006: 102). In a documentary film made two years before his death, Ichikawa even credits Wada for his debut, recalling that she chose the novel from which his first feature film was adapted, *Machiko* (Nogami Yaeko, 1928), which became *A Flower Blooms* (*Hana Hiraku*, 1948). Yet what began as a public love story between two creatives, with all the attendant gossip and popular attention that such stories tend to attract, has become a narrative of a slightly different order. In *The Kon Ichikawa Story* (*Ichikawa Kon*

monogatari, 2006), Iwai Shunji's documentary celebrating the director's life, we learn that the pen name Wada Natto was originally a shared name used between the two on collaborative writing projects, before Mogi Yumiko took it on alone to become the famous screenwriter of the 1950s and 1960s. Ichikawa recalls a home life featuring creative differences and arguments so intense that they would eat dinner together in silence. Eventually, he remembers, he would concede that her ideas were the better ones. Stories of the two arguing long into the night at home tie their authorship/ auteurship to a collaborative domestic space.

Ichikawa explicitly connects Wada's creativity with the domestic sphere, and feminine-ascribed qualities like tidiness and domestic order. "'Women…, well, my wife is very meticulous,' he sighs, 'So she always did a complete and very beautifully detailed scenario'" (Bock 2001: 40). Wada herself also insists on her domestic identity alongside her professional one in her own written discourse. In an article on her writing process, for example, she answers a question about decisions related to her adaptation of Ishihara Shintarō's novel *Punishment Room* (*Shokei no heya*, 1956), with reference to her identity as a mother. "Like mothers everywhere, I was shocked by the novel" (Wada 2001: 192). Wada's reference to her son follows a passage devoted to the technicalities of adapting literary works for the screen, marked literally as such with the opening phrase "To get slightly technical" (Wada 2001: 191). Like Kogure, she is invested in foregrounding her domestic roles, but unlike the actress she does not hide her professional creative capabilities.

While Wada is often positioned as the woman behind the scenes, or the silent partner in Ichikawa's creative life, we see everywhere Ichikawa's insistence on her presence, her input, and her own creativity, all of which are subtly gendered. In this aspect, Ichikawa's public performance also recalls Kogure Michiyo's, in that both

insist on their domestic attachments on order to further their creative possibilities. In Kogure's case, focusing public attention on her domestic role through creating an advice column in a popular magazine allowed her to leverage her home life to increase her fan base, popularity, and power at work, leading to greater opportunities for creativity and financial compensation. In Ichikawa's insistence on foregrounding his marital relationship as the creative force in his career, we can see a similar strategy.

Ichikawa's positioning of Wada as the generative force in his creative output at first appears to be a simple case of muse-creator inspiration. Yet the significant detail of the two sharing a pen name in their early years brings us back to *An Actor's Revenge*, in which the titular actor is an *onnagata* (female role impersonator) in the Kabuki theatre. The Japanese title of the film is in fact 'Yukinojo's revenge' (*Yukinojo henge*), and the main character sets out to avenge a wrong done not to Yukinojo the *onnagata*, but to the young boy he was before becoming a female impersonator. As a child, the main character witnessed a wealthy businessman ruin his parents, leading to their deaths. As Yukinojo, he gains access to the businessman's home and daughter, planning to ruin him slowly in revenge. In this way, the male actor leverages a feminized creative identity to achieve his personal goals.

Yukinojo is one public persona containing two persons of different genders – the female role actor and the man behind, with the memories of the orphaned male child. Conversely, Ichikawa and Wada/ Mogi began their careers as two individuals operating under one name, Wada Natto. Years later, when Ichikawa was victimized by Daiei studios and forced to create under commercial and bureaucratic constraints, Wada's script saved his doomed film, returning Ichikawa to a position of power in the prestige and box office reliant studio system. *An Actor's Revenge* is also Wada

Natto's revenge, and Wada and Ichikawa are both one person, and at the same time two different people.[1] Ichikawa and Wada/ Mogi's written and recorded discourse reveals this powerful creative agent as forged in the domestic sphere, where male and female creative identities do battle and ultimately merge.

'Living with the material': creativity and the domestic sphere

Using family and the domestic sphere, Kogure, Ichikawa, and Wada/ Mogi's strategic innovations opened up roads for more, and more creative, work in their restrictive studio environments. In these cases, creativity is located at the margins of the studio system rather than within the system itself. Furthermore, it seems significant that both Kogure and Ichikawa carved out space and resources for future creativity through the public performance of domestic roles and relations, in many ways embodying SCAP's ideal of the nuclear family as a base unit of democratic capitalist productivity. While leveraging family and the domestic to increase their power in the workplace, thereby opening up the possibility for greater creativity and independence in their careers, both Kogure and Ichikawa also used the domestic sphere as a space from which to create. Kogure's writing is a creative practice that draws from the space of the home, describing housework, furnishings, and the feeling of being domestic. Ichikawa more explicitly described his and Wada/ Mogi's creative practice as "living with the material" (Bock 2001: 40), taking it home, fighting about it while making and eating dinner, and collaboratively developing a creative approach for a particular project. In thinking about creativity and the creative industries then, we must not allow our focus on industry to blind us to the margins, including the very non-

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[1] Ichikawa Kon also used thriller writer Agatha Christie's name as a pen name for his writing (Bock 2001: 41). Given the cross-gender nature of Yukinojo's character in *An Actor's Revenge*, it is interesting to note that Ichikawa often takes on the names or personae of female creative.

industrial space of the domestic sphere, as a place where creativity also takes place. In some cases, the possibility for creativity in the workplace might even depend on creative use of the domestic as a place (both material and ideological) from which to build a power base (of popular acclaim as well as financial reward) that can persuade an industry to make space for different kinds of creative agency.

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