The Discourse of Feminization:
Effeminate Characters in Japanese Cinema (1945-1969)

Kenta Kato
June 26, 2023

A doctoral dissertation submitted to
the Graduate School of International Culture and Communication Studies
Waseda University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to Prof. Norimasa Morita for the unwavering support he has provided me since our initial meeting in 2013. His mentorship has been instrumental in my academic journey, from completing my Bachelor's degree, to obtaining my Master's and pursuing a PhD. His laid-back attitude made it much easier for me to survive the long-suffering process of completing my dissertation. Thank you for allowing me to pursue my own path.

I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my co-supervisors. First, I am grateful for the invaluable contributions of Prof. Greg Dvorak. During the early stages of my PhD journey, he played a pivotal role in shaping my approach to my research subject. Despite academia's emphasis on objectivity, Prof. Dvorak consistently challenged me to reflect on why my topic was personally significant to me, and encouraged me to take a more unconventional and queer approach than I had initially envisioned. Without Prof. Dvorak's invaluable input, my research would not have been the same.

Second, I would like to thank Dr. Katsuhiko Suganuma for kindly accepting to be part of my supervisory committee on short notice. His insightful questions and feedback during the intermediate review were crucial in helping me refine the direction of my thesis before its completion. I genuinely hope that our paths will cross again in the future, as I would be honored to continue our conversations.

I would like to give special thanks to Prof. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto. Since my undergraduate years, his writings and classes have been a source of inspiration and had a profound impact on my approach to filmic texts. In particular, the independent study I

had with Prof. Yoshimoto was a thought-provoking experience that went beyond rethinking the direction of my thesis. It prompted me to critically engage on a meta-level, examining the role of universities and academic societies in shaping knowledge production. I sincerely hope that our conversations will continue to contribute to something fundamentally meaningful in the future.

I am also indebted to other scholars and professors who generously shared their knowledge and time with me, including Dr. Marcos Centeno, Prof. Bryan Hikari Hartzheim, Prof. Kubo Yutaka, Prof. Claire Maree, Dr. Jose Montaño, Prof. Johan Nordström (and his wonderful students in the "Japanese Cinema and Modernity" class), and Dr. Niall Richardson. I would also like to express my gratitude to the researchers and librarians at the Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, the Shōchiku Ōtani Library, and the Kawakita Memorial Film Institute for their assistance. I am particularly grateful to Alo Joekalda at the National Film Archive of Japan for arranging a special screening for me. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the generous financial support provided by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and the Atsumi International Foundation. Without their contributions, the completion of my dissertation would have been nearly impossible.

My gratitude is extended to my friends and comrades at Prof. Morita's seminar, the Writing Center, and study groups. In particular, I would like to express appreciation for my friendships with Azumi, who kindly proofread parts of my thesis at the last minute, and Lucia. I feel blessed to have built such wonderful relationships with fellow PhD students in the same seminar, who could have potentially been competitive or unkind. My special thanks go to Jin, who generously proofread my thesis, provided honest and critical feedback, and encouraged me during the most difficult moments before submission. I am

truly thankful to all of you for making my life better through your support and kindness.

Finally, let me thank all who I consider as my parents. Karen Severns and Koichi Mori have been like third parents to me since our initial encounter. They have provided me with numerous opportunities to write about films and work in the industry, always encouraging me to aim big and explore the world. Tetsu-sensei, Kimi-san, and Geraldo have been my second parents, giving me unwavering support since the very first semester of university. Thank you for always inviting me to birthday parties and involving me in mischievous activities. You really are responsible for what I have become, and I hope I have turned out well enough for you to be proud of.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my (biological) parents. This thesis is dedicated to them.

Table of Contents

Notes on Japanese Names, Romanization, Pronoun, and Translation

Japanese names are written in the Japanese order, with the family name first, unless referring to scholars who primarily publish in English and use the Western name order. When romanizing Japanese names and words, macrons are used to indicate long vowels, but are omitted in commonly used English words.

English titles of Japanese films are enclosed in brackets and accompanied by the year of release in Japan upon their initial mention. If no official English title is available, I will provide a translation.

The singular pronoun “they” is used when referring to an individual who identifies as neither male nor female and characters whose gender is ambiguous.

All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

Introduction

A brief perplexing moment is inserted near the beginning of Masumura Yasuzō's *Aozora musume* (*The Blue Sky Maiden*, 1957). The scene features Ono Yūko (Wakao Ayako), a teenage girl from Izu, who has come to Tokyo for the first time. Confused right outside the station, she approaches random people on the street to ask for directions to Aoyama. The first person she asks, a busy salaryman, only offers a terse recommendation to take a train before hurrying away. The second person she asks, an annoyed young woman, responds to Yūko's request with hostility, telling her to go "that way." Suddenly, the woman calls out, "Hey, George!" and a fashionably-dressed person wearing rings and earrings appears on screen. Using women's language, George apologizes to Mariko (the unfriendly woman) for being late due to lipstick mistakes, casually kisses her on the cheek, and leaves cheerfully with her. An astonished Yūko is left alone in the frame, just staring in the direction where Mariko and George have gone.

Despite their disconnection from the main plot of *Aozora musume*, George is shrouded in ambiguity. First, George's sexuality and gender identity defy easy classification. Their meticulous attention to their appearance and use of women's language come across as more feminine than masculine. Having said that, their gender identity is assumed to be male as their name is George after all. Should their feminine qualities be read as an indicator of an unrepresentable identity, possibly that of gay or transgender? Or is a "straight" reading more appropriate, regarding them as a heterosexual effeminate man? Second, adding further complexity to George's identity is the issue of nationality. The coexistence of Japanese-language proficiency and the Western name problematizes national labels, such as "Japanese." The film, however, offers no textual

evidence regarding George's identity, leaving the audience to rely solely on signifiers to make assumptions. And as the main narrative unfolds, the identity issues of the fictional character who only appears for a few seconds are soon forgotten.

This research sheds light on such figures that have been overlooked in the scholarship of Japanese cinema: effeminate characters, whose gender presentation is purposed to imply their sexuality and/or gender identity. George certainly is not the only example of this kind, but rather represents a broader set of character types that consistently appear in Japanese cinema from the late 1940s to the 1960s when major films were produced by big studios (namely, Tōhō, Shōchiku, Daiei, Tōei, Nikkatsu, and Shin-Tōhō). Oftentimes, their presence in the text is too limited and underdeveloped to be even called a character in a traditional sense, a motivated agent in the narrative. However, their consistent appearance in Japanese cinema makes them a set character type that deserves closer examination. By analyzing their portrayals, this research seeks to explore the broader cultural implications of effeminate representations and make a contribution to the discussions surrounding gender, sexuality, and national identity in Japanese cinema scholarship.

This research has two main aims. First, it seeks to explore the historical conditions that impacted the representation of effeminate characters. By contextualizing these representations within the post-war Japanese society and the Japanese film industry, it is possible to uncover the means that were available or unavailable for portraying effeminacy. The image of George tells us not who these figures were but rather what made them appear the way they appear. Second, this research examines the role of effeminate characters in the filmic text, exploring how they articulate the norms of gender and sexuality, and national identity in post-war Japan. These characters are marked by their

indeterminacy, complicating the binary distinctions of masculine/feminine, heterosexual/homosexual, and Japanese/Western. However, the extent to which they are subverting or reinforcing blurred boundaries is a subject of debate. George offers a ground on which identities are negotiated and articulated, illuminating the ideological underpinnings of post-war Japan.

How to Do a History of Queer Representation

A history of effeminate characters is indivisible from queer representation. Although filmic texts rarely offer a "proof" of their identity, representation bespeaks something about their sexual orientation and/or gender identification. However, it is problematic to apply contemporary terminology (be it LGBT or non-binary) to materials from the 1950s and 1960s when the distinction between gay and MTF transgender was not widely shared by the public as common knowledge. To address this issue, this section draws on relevant literature in queer cinema studies and examines the theoretical premise that underpins this research: namely how to approach a history of queer representation.

The issues surrounding early queer (mis)representation and its historicity have widely been discussed in the scholarship on Hollywood cinema. A foundational work is *The Celluloid Closet* (1981) by Vito Russo, who initiated a moralistic approach to queer representation. Russo's research chronicles Hollywood's depiction of homosexuality from the birth of cinema to the 1980s, unveiling its discriminatory treatment.[1] In early Hollywood representations, an effeminate stereotype of male homosexuality was widespread by the 1920s with established character types, known as sissy and/or pansy,

[1] For similar historical accounts of queer representation, see Tyler, Weiss, and Barrios.

whose sexuality is rarely explicit and only coded (Benshoff and Griffin 25).[2] For Russo, the cinematic unspeakability of homosexuality embodied by the sissy exemplifies society's treatment of sexual minorities:

> The fact that most early movie sissies were homosexual only if one chose to see them as being homosexual was simply a reflection of the fact that the existence of homosexuals in society was acknowledged only when society chose to do so. […] Sissies were an outlet for unspeakable ideas. (32)

Regarding the sissy stereotype as a connotative sign of homosexuality, Russo's research critically scrutinizes Hollywood representations for constructing a homophobic imaginary. Russo concludes, "There never have been lesbians or gay men in Hollywood films. Only homosexuals" (245).

Despite (or because of) its methodological impact, Russo's groundbreaking work has been criticized for its limited perspective and lack of theorization. One of the harshest criticisms comes from Ellis Hanson, who categorizes the likes of *The Celluloid Closet* as the "*politics of representation*" model (5).[3] For Hanson, this moralistic approach misses the bigger picture surrounding the politics of queer representation: "Russo calls for greater accuracy in the representation of homosexuals. But what is the truth of homosexuality? Whose experience is genuine and whose is merely a stereotype?" (8). The politics of representation model is confined to a simplistic question of "Does it offend

[2] Regarding the differences between sissy and pansy, David M. Lugowski notes that a sissy is typically asexual, "sometimes befuddled, incompetent, and, if married, very henpecked," whereas a pansy has "an extremely effeminate boulevardier type sporting lipstick, rouge, a trim mustache and hairstyle, and an equally trim suit, incomplete without a boutonniere" (4).

[3] Highlighted in the original.

me?" without exploring on what grounds anyone can judge which representations are "good" or "bad" (Hanson 7). Thus, positivity and negativity cannot be "the best standards to use when measuring the political impact of any given representation" (Halberstam 185).

More recent approaches seek to comprehend the historicity of queer representation without being judgmental of its potentially harmful past. One approach is to reevaluate the sissy stereotype as a significant historical material and to use filmic texts as a gateway to the past. In *Queer Sexualities in Early Film* (2016), for example, Shane Brown problematizes Russo's research for overlooking the historical contexts of queer representation, noting that "the sissy was often a reflection not of fears of homosexuality but fears of an erosion of traditional masculinity" (10). Brown emphasizes the significance of contextualization to discover "how sexuality and gender were viewed at the time in which the films were made and within the culture in which they were made" (11). This approach avoids the moralistic pitfall Russo falls into, as the aim is not to judge but to understand the past by "read[ing] these films in the way they were intended rather than from a modern viewpoint" (Brown 11).

However, Brown's historical approach ironically does not provide much guidance on how to approach history. While it is a common cliché to claim that "films reflect the time they were made in," it is unclear how much we can truly understand the past. To what extent are the values of the time reflected in the actual filmic texts? And is knowing the facts of the past enough to escape from a modern viewpoint? What Brown's insufficient theorization highlights is the need to be mindful of the condition of historicization, of how much the way we seek to understand history is already constituted by the very viewpoint we aim to transcend.

The way in which we can approach the (un)knowability of the past has been

more thoroughly theorized by scholars working on lesbian representation and historiography. Particularly in *Queer Timing* (2019), Susan Potter stresses that what we think we know about sexual knowledge of the past is produced in multiple and often contradictory terms. According to Potter,

> As many historians of sexuality and queer theorists have taught us, such knowledge does not guarantee transparent historical insight since it is one of the means by which sexuality arises and is sustained, from the contradictory epistemologies of new disciplines such as sexology to its entanglement in everyday and seemingly benign forms of visual pleasure. (Introduction)

To avoid suppressing the unintelligible sexual knowledge of the past and the queer futurity that could have been, Potter suggests temporarily suspending our present-day understandings of sexuality. In the end, "the sexual legibility of any film or material artifact is opaque to us 'sexual moderns'" (Introduction). Potter's methodological stance is to acknowledge that "the past is different from the present, particularly in terms of sexual subjectivity" without "acced[ing] to a homophobic denial of the historical existence of same-sex desire or queer ways of living and being" (Introduction).

Potter's conceptualization offers a valuable framework for analyzing queer representation in Japanese cinema. While it is certainly essential to scrutinize harmful misrepresentations in a Russo-esque manner, making judgement based on present-day values can limit our perspective and understanding of texts from the past. Although contextualization is an effective approach to uncovering the social nuances of these texts, it is still constrained by a modern viewpoint as the meaning of queer representation in the

past can only be attached from today's standpoint. While acknowledging that our understanding of depictions of sexuality in films made seventy to eighty years ago is inevitably impacted by the way we approach the texts today, it is at least important to appreciate their inherent ambiguity and unknowability, rather than imposing contemporary understandings.

If so, it is unproductive to ask if George in *Aozora musume* is gay or straight. The primary means by which queer representation becomes discernible as such are not the character's identity, but rather their non-normative presentation. And a fluid indicator of different kinds of sexuality without being categorically decisive, shifting the focus from identity to gender performance, is none other than effeminacy.

Epistemology of Effeminate Characters

What makes effeminate characters a distinct type is their gender performance. Having said that, it is not a restrictive term that disregards the importance of sexuality, but an approach that explores the interplay of gender and sexuality. Drawing on relevant literature, this section addresses the relation between effeminacy and male homosexuality and considers how the viewer perceives effeminate characters as such.

The term "effeminacy" is chosen not to prioritize gender over sexuality, but to illuminate the interrelation between the two. Our unconscious reading practice to construe effeminacy as an indicator of non-normative sexuality stems from the historical fact that male homosexuality has often been negatively associated with gender transitivity. As argued by Michel Foucault, "Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a

hermaphrodism of the soul" (43). The conflation of homosexuality and effeminacy has led to the fierce dismissal of the effeminate, or what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick calls "effeminophobia" ("How" 20), referring to "our culture's pervasive fear of effeminate boys" (Mavor 72). Effeminacy, a recognizable predicator of internal sexual orientation, has been viewed as abominable and laughable, "causing acute embarrassment and disgust not only among the intolerant but the socially progressive as well" (Harris 72).[4] The concept of effeminacy came into being for the purpose of heteronormative expediency, to sustain the boundaries of both masculine/feminine and heterosexual/homosexual, by conflating the issues of gender and sexuality. Thus, cinematic representations of effeminacy cannot be separated from the pervasive homophobia and transphobia that underlie cultural constructions of knowledge about the sexually marginalized.

When male homosexuality is conflated with effeminacy, the individual's outward presentation become an indicator of their inner sexual orientation. To that end, this research takes a social constructivist approach, which regards effeminacy to be performative. According to Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, "Gender ought not to be constructed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*" (140).[5] As the construction of gender is merely the outcome of an everlasting iteration of performance, there is no ontological quality of masculinity, femininity, or effeminacy. Upon the gender attribution process – "[t]he process by which one classifies another as female or male" (Kessler and McKenna ix) – bodily gestures and physical appearances "constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered

[4] Effeminophobia is also founded in misogyny. According to Alan Sinfield, "[T]he root idea is of a male falling away from the purposeful reasonableness that is supposed to constitute manliness, into the laxity and weakness conventionally attributed to women" (*Cultural Politics* 15).
[5] Emphasized in the original.

self" (Butler 140). In the case of cinema, the viewer unconsciously but instantly determines if an introduced character is male or female based on audiovisual information. As film is a visually-oriented medium which relies heavily on *mise-en-scène* to produce meaning, the gender presentation of characters becomes a key factor in the process of cinematic gender attribution.

An epistemology of effeminacy can be theorized as an expansion of this attribution process: effeminate characters become recognizable due to a dissonance between the gender performed and their anatomical sex. On the one hand, the gender presentation of George (gaudy clothes, multiple accessories, lipstick, and the use of women's language) signals femininity. However, female gender will not be attributed to them as the viewer is somehow aware of their male biological status (indicated by their name, facial expressions, and low-pitched voice). Richard Dyer has illustrated such gender performance as "in-betweenism," referring to "people who in failing, because of not being heterosexual, to be real women or men, at the same time fail to be truly masculine or feminine in other ways" (*The Matter* 37). Trapped in an equivocal in-between of gender norms, George is a gender failure who voluntarily refuses to perform the male gender code but fails to pass as a woman either.[6]

For the viewer to acknowledge that the performed gender is not correlated to anatomical sex, the dissonance needs to be emphasized to the extent that it becomes easily perceivable. As a means of conveniently and instantly highlighting non-normative gender performances, cultural products rely heavily on stereotypes and iconography. These

[6] The effeminate character's incapability to perform the gender codes properly differentiates them from female impersonators (*onnagata*). *Onnagata* on the Kabuki stage are expected to perfectly embody femininity (or the conceptualization of how women should be) to the extent that some performers are honored as living national treasures. For a female impersonator to be an effeminate character, one has to be a bad *onnagata*.

socially-coded signs that signify effeminacy are often transculturally shared (cowardice, sashaying walk, high-pitched voice, among others), but some traits are culturally specific. In the case of Japanese cultural products, the most common strategy to highlight effeminacy is the use of women's language (*onna-kotoba*).[7] The appropriation of stereotypical women's language by biologically male speakers is also theorized in today's academic discourses as *onē-kotoba* (big sister's speech). According to Claire Maree, "*onē-kotoba* is not simply an attempt to mimic stereotypical women's language, it is much more a parody of what 'women' say, and how they say it" ("Grrrl-Queens" 74). Although this linguistic practice can be regarded as an example of camp talk that troubles gender conventions, this research focuses less on the agency of the speakers than on how such speech patterns are socially coded to signal difference.[8] To that end, *onē-kotoba* should be seen as a role language (*yakuwarigo*), a term coined by Kinsui Satoshi, which refers to "a special set of spoken language features that include vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, which correspond to the speaker's social and cultural stereotypes" (iii).[9] The parodic nature of *onē-kotoba* is not a critical subversion of femininity but rather an oversimplified sign, indicative of what heteronormative society believes male gender nonconformity is. Effeminate characters do not speak in *onē-kotoba* because of their sexuality or gender identification as such; rather, characters become effeminate with the assignment of the specific speech pattern.

---

[7] For the historical formation of *onna-kotoba*, see Inoue.

[8] For the possibility of camp talk in Japanese media, see Abe.

[9] Maree describes the characteristics of *onē-kotoba*, or what she calls queen-talk, as follows:

> Queen-talk relies heavily on paralinguistic features (stress, exaggerated intonation, pitch) in combination with a scathing wit, articulated by incorporating non-normative use of linguistic resources that index femininity, such as the casual first-pronoun *atashi* (I/me), vulgar and/or casual second-pronoun *anta* (you), stereotypically feminine interactive particles such as *wa* and *no*, and feminine names where, for example, the last character of a name is playfully altered so that *Takao* (masculine) becomes *Takako* (feminine). (*queerqueen* Introduction; emphasized in the original)

The evidential status of effeminate characters is founded upon societal and cultural codes that are believed to construct effeminacy and the exaggeration of these performative features. While such effeminate performances can serve as markers of "interior androgyny," these features alone are insufficient semiotic "proof" to rescue homosexuality from the realm of invisibility.[10] The ideological role of effeminacy is to render male homosexuality (in)visible, constructing and perpetuating a cultural imaginary of sexual minorities while silencing their actual livings and beings.

Approaching Japanese Cinema through Effeminacy

While the investigation of effeminate characters is an unexplored terrain, this research does not exist in isolation from existing scholarship. This research particularly builds upon and responds to the extensive literature on Japanese cinema studies, with a focus on the intersections of gender, sexuality, and post-war national identity. A historical and ideological analysis of effeminacy can contribute to challenging a heteronormative history of Japanese cinema, opening up a new perspective that plays with binary gender norms.

Despite the frequent appearance of effeminate characters, there has been a lack of scholarly attention to the possible historical misrepresentation of sexual minorities in queer studies of Japanese cinema. Instead, queer readings have been a common approach to overturning the predominantly heteronormative interpretations of Japanese film history. From Hara Setsuko's star persona (Kanno) to queer authorship of Kinoshita Keisuke (Kubo, *Yūyake*), film scholars have actively read against the grain and explored queer

[10] On denotation and connotation of homosexuality, see Miller.

traces of Japanese cinema. While such strategic reading practices have been successful in subverting straight understandings of Japanese films, effeminate characters seem to have been taken for granted as a stereotypical misrepresentation and have not received significant scholarly attention.[11]

However, harmful representations offer a rich object of scholarly analysis that can raise crucial questions about the politics of misrepresentation and stereotyping. In particular, the examination of effeminate characters can underline how a heteronormative society constructs and imagines sexual minorities. There should be no denying that effeminate characters have contributed to forging a cultural imaginary of sexual minorities, to the extent that such iconography is widespread enough to be called as "*okama*" characters.[12] While their biased treatment should be criticized, simply labelling them as stereotypes or reading against the grain cannot provide a thorough examination of their immense popularity that continues to this day in Japanese popular media, including film, television, anime, and comic books. Therefore, it is essential to investigate in what way effeminate characters are imagined and for what purpose they are consumed. Through approaching effeminacy in Japanese cinema, we can discover how the imagination of sexual minorities has transformed throughout history and how it is consumed for different purposes in different historical moments.

Along with historical investigation, this research utilizes effeminacy as a heuristic device to reconceptualize national gender identity in post-war Japanese cinema. The period following Japan's defeat in World War II was a time of turbulence, during

[11] Kubo Yutaka's analysis of gay characters in Nikkatsu Roman Porn is one of the first attempts to shed light on misrepresentation of male homosexuality ("Nikkatsu").
[12] "*Okama*" is a pejorative slang that refers to effeminate homosexuals. On its historical and social accounts, see Pflugfelder and Lunsing.

which any conceptions prevalent during wartime were questioned and reformulated.[13] When military masculinity lost its hegemonic position, the defeated nation underwent negotiations to establish gender identities appropriate for the post-war era. The Japanese cinema scholarship has illustrated how films played an active role in reconstituting Japan's gendered subjectivity.[14] As the section below would reveal, however, previous research has predominantly focused on women's representation, leading to the invisibility of masculinity. Approaching the texts through the lens of effeminacy offers a new framework in conceptualizing how masculinity and femininity are not opposites but rather intertwined in the construction of gender identity in post-war Japan.

In academic discourses on Japanese cinema, it has been commonly argued that the negotiation of national identity after the defeat was tasked to women. When the role of men is mentioned in academic writings, they often focus on the absence of masculinity instead of its presence in the immediate post-war period. Kitamura Kyōhei's research on female stars, for instance, highlights the lack of ideal masculine images on post-war screens. This is because, according to Kitamura, the defeat prevented the construction of ideal masculinity whereas the liberated female body became a more convenient symbol of renewal (38). While female stars and women's bodies are rich objects of scholarly analysis due to their political complexities, the male body is considered to have failed in providing significant transformation (at least until the emergence of *taiyō-zoku* in the mid-1950s).[15]

---

[13] This research intentionally employs the term "defeat" to denote the end of World War II and Japan's surrender in 1945, in order to highlight "the 'distracted' and 'dejected' condition of the people" (Dower 89).

[14] In this thesis, subjectivity is used to mean the quality of being a subject, as opposed to being a passive object.

[15] Research on women's representation in negotiating post-war democratic values includes examinations of Mizoguchi Kenji films by Kinoshita Chika, the female prostitutes by Irene González-López, and urban comedy by Ku Mina.

Another approach to masculine images in Japanese cinema is to consider the invisibility itself as a manifestation of patriarchal ideology. Critic Yajima Midori, for example, analyzes the strong centrality of women in films made by prominent male directors (such as Kinoshita, Masumura, and Shindō Kaneto), and detects a shadow of men behind these female representations. For Yajima, the existence of mothers is merely a reflection of men's anxiety about masculinity, which was questioned after the defeat (30). Building on Yajima's scrutiny of the sanctification of mothers, film scholar Saitō Ayako provides a theoretical backbone for understanding invisible masculinity in Japanese cinema by employing Kaja Silverman's concept of the dominant fiction. According to Silverman, the dominant fiction is "the representational system through which the subject is accommodated to the Name-of-the-Father. Its most central signifier of unity is the (paternal) family, and its primary signifier of privilege the phallus" (34). Nevertheless, the grand narrative constituted by the heteronormative social system can be disrupted by historical trauma, which refers to

> any historical event, whether socially engineered or of natural occurrence, which brings a large group of male subjects into such an intimate relation with lack that they are at least for the moment unable to sustain an imaginary relation with the phallus, and so withdraw their belief from the dominant fiction. (Silverman 55)

As an outcome of traumatic events, the dominant fiction can be challenged, leading to the social revival or the potential reformation of social order. For Saitō, the narrative centralization of women's suffering in Japanese cinema is a patriarchal representational

tactic to sustain the dominant fiction of Japan after the traumatic defeat. Women's bodies are merely employed as devices to engineer melodramatic response, to heal castrated male subjects from emasculation; in other words, castration anxiety is displaced onto the bodies of women (Saitō, "Ushinawareta Phallus" 92–93). The significance of these arguments is that they expose that the absence of men is a patriarchal strategy by male subjects to regain their status.

While these previous literatures have offered effective analyses in their own right, the approach of invisibility is a limiting method. First, it cannot look deeper into the fluidity and multiplicity of masculinity and femininity beyond a gender binary. Treating masculinity as invisible can divert attention away from the invisibility itself, leaving masculinity underexamined. Particularly, Silverman's psychoanalytic approach can only imagine masculinity as an absolute one, a phallus. The conceptual formation of phallogocentrism is founded on the fixation of masculinity as universal and predetermined, positing women as a difference that represents the lack. The psychoanalysis-incurred approach fails to account for the plurality of masculinity and femininity that breaks free from the cage of phallic absoluteness. Women's presence and men's absence are based on a rigid gender binary with no exploration of the interplay, mixture, or subversion of the two categories.

Second, stressing men's castration, absence, and failure to provide an ideal image can entail an adverse effect, inviting conservative responses to historical trauma and social transformation, which are often described as "the crisis of masculinity." The destruction of masculinity is most rooted in a reactionary attempt to call for the reformation of the "original" idea. As argued by Pam Cook in the analysis of masculinity in *Raging Bull* (1980), "This loss [of male power] activates the desire to call it up once

more: we mourn the loss, so the founding image of male power, the phallus, is centred yet again" (177). When something is lacking, our desire to fill the lack becomes natural and justifiable. Highlighting the absence of masculinity may perpetuate the notion that there is a stable male subjectivity that should be reclaimed.

Approaching Japanese cinema through effeminacy can challenge the notion of masculinity as a monolithic, invisible force by recognizing gender formation as a negotiated process. As this research takes a social constructivist approach, masculinity is merely an outcome of ongoing negotiations between different ideas that are competing simultaneously. In *Masculinities* (1995), R. W. Connell stresses the relationality and plurality of masculinity. According to Connell, the concept of masculinity is "inherently relational" as it "does not exist except in contrast with 'femininity'" (68). Connell further emphasizes the relations of masculinities *themselves*, to expose a power hierarchy among four types: hegemony, subordination, complicity, and marginalization (76–81). Masculinity is a temporary outcome of ongoing competition among different types of masculinities that are endlessly vying for the hegemonic position. From that perspective, masculinity has no original state to which it can return. The "masculinity in crisis" discourse presupposes the existence of masculinity that can be destabilized, but theoretically speaking masculinity cannot be destructed or put into crisis as there is no masculinity that exists *a priori*.[16]

[16] Masculinity as negotiation has been a popular framework among film scholars working on masculine representations. These scholars tend to clarify their methodological rejection to previous scholarship that puts too much emphasis on "the crisis" of masculinity. In *Detecting Men* (2006), for instance, Philippa Gates claims, "[W]hat is perceived as a crisis is actually just the resistance and confusion that arises in the face of changing conceptions and realities of masculinity" (50). What matters is how films reacted to the conceptual transformation of masculinity in those changing times. Following Gates, Barry Keith Grant's *Shadows of Doubt* (2010) makes clear its methodological stance, "[T]hey [genre films] offer part of an ongoing dialogue with audiences about the ceaseless challenges to and valorization of heteronormative ideals – what I call 'negotiations' – in a constantly changing society at specific points in time" (6).

The social constructivist approach, with effeminacy at its center, can fill the gap in literature where post-war national identity has been examined based on a gender binary, by complicating the simple idea of collapsed masculinity and liberated femininity. This approach is especially effective because gender identity of Japan after the defeat was formed in paradox and cannot be reduced to simple male or female categories. Japan's political subjugation to the US after the surrender has been metaphorically viewed in a gendered and sexualized manner, often referred to as "feminized." Being noteworthy, Yoshikuni Igarashi theorizes the post-war political alliance between the US and Japan as "a melodrama of rescue and conversion" (*Bodies* 28–29). Igarashi argues, "The relationship between the United States and Japan in the postwar melodrama is highly sexualized. The drama casts the United States as a male and Hirohito and Japan as a docile female, who unconditionally accepts the United States' desire for self-assurance" (*Bodies* 29). Although the melodramatic national affinity successfully led to the subsequent economic recovery, Japan's "feminized" subjugation to the US has been described in a sexually negative manner (be it castration or impotence), as a struggle to establish a new form of masculinity after the defeat.[17] In particular, the use of feminization as a rhetorical device to evoke national shame, in contrast to the virility of the US forces, has been common in literature, with Ōe Kenzaburō being a prominent example.[18] This research

[17] For example, the powerful visualization of Japan's emasculation is *panpan*, prostitutes mostly catered for the US soldiers. Through the eyes of Japanese men, *panpan* was nothing but a symbol of the Occupation. As noted by John W. Dower, "The panpan arm in arm with her GI companion, or riding gaily in his jeep, constituted a piercing wound to national pride in general and masculine pride in particular" (135).

[18] In his early work *Ningen no hitsuji* (*Human Sheep*, 1958), Ōe actively portrays (homo)sexual relationships between Japanese and Americans that symbolize the power dynamics between the two nations. As pointed out by Michael S. Molasky, "These literary depictions of powerless men commonly rely on sexual metaphors of castration and impotence, metaphors that present the men as 'feminized' and thereby equate men's social powerlessness under foreign occupation with that of women under supposedly normal social conditions" (28).

refers to these gendered and sexualized descriptions of post-defeat Japan as the discourse of feminization, a reactionary response to the defeat and occupation as a means to negotiate with the defeated male subject. As I have argued elsewhere, such writings are rooted in inherent sexism which posits that "the nation should be masculine, and the emasculation of Japan embodies national shame because it is a condition that must be avoided" (Kato, "Kissing" 1867). Oscillating between political necessity and national shame, Japan's post-war identity was paradoxically established as the formation of a male subject was only possible through Japan's subjugated, "feminized" position. The traces of this paradoxical formation of national identity in Japanese cinema can be explored fully by using effeminacy as a theoretical tool, which can complicate the binary of collapsed masculinity and liberated femininity.

Embracing Effeminacy

This section delves into the theoretical potential of effeminacy, informed by recent scholarship that seeks to reclaim it from negativity. Its definitional difficulty should be viewed positively as an analytical opportunity, which can elicit multiple reactions to the subversion of social norms. This approach is particularly effective in analyzing how effeminate characters provide pleasure in consuming the feminization of Japan.

As described in the previous section, effeminacy has historically been regarded as an indicator of potential homosexuality. The negative connotations associated with effeminacy stem from its elusive nature: it diverges itself from proper masculinity and biological femininity, from appropriate heterosexuality and evidential homosexuality. Thus, it is easier to describe effeminacy based on what it is not than what it is because the

usage of the word is motivated by more rejection than approval, absence than presence. That being said, this research embraces the ambiguity and indeterminacy of effeminacy as an unexpected virtue, following Robyn R. Warhol's approach of "rehabilitating 'effeminacy' from the pejorative status it currently holds" (10).[19] This is because its free-floating status can allow for the incorporation of diverse sexualities and elicit varied reactions towards effeminacy.

One of the features of effeminacy is that what it signifies is not historically or culturally fixated but context-dependent. David M. Halperin, for instance, stresses the fact that "[e]ffeminacy has traditionally functioned as a marker of heterosexual excess in men" (94), as romantic attachment to women was considered unmanly and an antithesis of masculine virtues like war and chivalry. Similarly, Sinfield's research on British dandies reveals that effete qualities were associated with the leisure class, idleness, and womanizing activities, prior to the 1895 Oscar Wilde trial (*The Wilde Century* 67–75). The conflation of effeminacy with heterosexual desire can also be seen in Japanese contexts, such as Kabuki theater's romantic lover *nimaime* (in contrast to chivalrous warrior *tateyaku*), or the 1920s youth culture's modernized and flirtatious *nanpa* (in opposition to traditional *kōha*). Effeminacy is a relational term that hinges on divergence from normative masculinity, whose meaning can vary across historical contexts.

Another feature is that societal reactions towards effeminacy trigger not only hatred and disgust, but also awe and fascination. Harry Thomas Jr. has identified an inherent contradiction in the representational mode of effeminacy in American literature, which is termed as "the effeminate paradox" (21). According to Thomas Jr., "[W]e need

[19] In recent scholarship, there has been a trend to rehabilitate effeminacy from negative associations. For example, see Ross and anthology *Male Femininities* (2023).

to be cognizant of the ways in which effeminacy is always paradoxical, always hybrid, always teetering between revolting audiences and fascinating them" (21–22). Thomas Jr's claim can also be supported by the sustained presence of effeminate characters in Japanese cinema. As this research will demonstrate, sissified performances have been a common cinematic troupe on post-war Japanese screens, and their popularity cannot be fully explained by mere disgust. Russo once wrote, "there is something about a man who acts like a woman that people find fundamentally distasteful" (4). However, we need to further elaborate on Russo's claim: there is also something about a man who acts like a woman that people find fascinating. Conceptualizing effeminacy as homosexual shame is historically significant but too limited a method to appreciate the equivocality of the term.

However effeminacy can be defined, it is a valuable theoretical tool because it can encompass diverse and conflicting interpretations. On the one hand, effeminacy is a descriptive term that socially constructs a sissy stereotype and renders sexual ambiguities recognizable. On the other hand, effeminacy can offer an instance in which the gender order is unsettled and contested, repulsing and/or captivating the audience precisely because of its subversive nature. The significance of using effeminacy as a theoretical tool lies in its ability to incorporate multiple and contradictory responses in analyzing how texts provide a platform for the audience to consume subversive moments.

What this research mainly argues is that effeminate characters in Japanese cinema offer such a subversive instance for the consumption of a heteronormative society. On the one hand, the portrayal of effeminacy as a source of humor and threat contributes to the discourse of feminization that regards Japan's subjugation with shame and disgust. However, popular films as commodifiable products also provide pleasure in viewing Japan's subjugation and feminization. Despite their minor presence in cinematic texts,

effeminate characters' parodic gender performances can provide momentary instances in which the norms of the center are mockingly undermined in a way that is enjoyable for the audience. Thus, the term "discourse" should be employed in a Foucauldian manner, as "a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable" (100). According to Foucault,

> We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (101)

Effeminate characters are part of the discourse of feminization, not merely because they can symbolize the rejection of the feminine in post-war Japan, but also because they have the potential to cause a temporary exposure or subversion of the very system that enforces oppression. Regardless of whether social norms are eventually reorganized or challenged, effeminate characters offer an opportunity where the paradox of Japan's gendered identity is exposed, so that the heteronormative audience can enjoy the feminization of Japan.

Research Scope and Methodology

This research examines effeminate characters in Japanese cinema during the post-war era, from 1945 to 1969. While any historical distinction is destined to be

arbitrary, the selection of this time period is motivated by the following reasons. First, it encompasses Japan's socio-political transformation in relation to the US, from the surrender to the economic recovery. According to Ōsawa Masachi, Japan's post-war era spanned from 1945 to 1970, a period during which the country's submission to US military forces and ideology was largely accepted as a natural course of events (187–188). While the US's presence in Japanese post-war history is more complicated than Ōsawa suggests, setting this time period is effective in examining how Japan's gendered subjectivity was negotiated in response to the US-led social formation. Second, the time period can include different stages of the Japanese film industry: from film regulations by the Occupation forces after the defeat, to the dissolution of the studio system. This timeframe allows for the investigation of how effeminacy was imagined in popular cinema before the blossom of politically-charged independent films, including landmark queer cinema *Bara no sōretsu* (*Funeral Parade of Roses*, 1969) by Matsumoto Toshio.

Data on effeminate characters, identified by their gender performance, are collected from the years 2017 to 2023, from over 1250 Japanese films produced in the specified period. Any popular film featuring effeminate characters is the interest of this study, including films that are easily available on home-video releases, as well as rare titles that are screened in repertory cinemas and aired on cable channels. The selection of films has little to do with the artistic quality of each work, as the cultural imaginary of effeminacy cannot be attributed to either the institutional practice of particular film studios or the auteuristic trait of specific filmmakers. Effeminate characters are a widely diffused characterization that goes beyond the intentions of individual companies and directors. Having said that, this research consciously attempts to include unfamiliar films that are largely forgotten and ignored in academic discourses. Although these insignificant

works may be dismissed as “bad” program pictures, even minor films deserve scholarly attention, especially in the age of digital archiving. The versatility of Japanese cinema has yet to be fully examined, due to academic inclinations to prioritize art movies, filmmakers, and genres.

To analyze the identified data, this research utilizes both contextualization and textual analysis. First, the data is analyzed within the context of post-war Japan to situate the effeminate representations within a broader historical, social, and cultural discourse surrounding gender and sexuality. Primary sources, such as film regulation documents, newspapers, weekly magazines, and movie pamphlets, are examined for their relevance to the topics. However, the purpose of contextualization is not to understand the fact of the past, nor to explore its reflection in filmic texts. Rather, it aims to reveal what Patricia White calls the conditions of representability: socio-political contexts that determine the types of representations that are possible (2). Investigating contextual backgrounds is essential as it can expose the often paradoxical means and values that were available and may have influenced the representational patterns of effeminate characters that survive today.

After contextualizing the data, the selected representations of effeminacy are subjected to textual analysis to examine both how these characters are depicted and what kind of ideological effects they generate. The textual analysis includes an examination of the diegetic world, narrative or selected scenes, to understand the role of effeminate characters, as well as an analysis of formal elements, such as camera movement, editing, and *mise-en-scène*, to reveal how these characters’ actions are visually conveyed. Analyzing both the texts and contexts can reveal how historical conditions and cinematic portrayals of effeminacy shape the negotiation and expression of gendered identity in

post-war Japan.

Chapter Outline

This thesis is divided into five chapters, each exploring a different aspect of effeminacy during the post-war years: male prostitutes, the modern boy, the sisterboy, the gay boy, and the yakuza. While these chapters are organized chronologically to some extent, they are not intended to present a linear history of cinematic representations of effeminacy, nor are the representations of these characters mutually exclusive. These categories are not necessarily specific types of effeminate characters but rather perspectives that allow for approaching effeminacy in post-war Japan. Each chapter begins with an examination of the historical and social contexts that shaped the representability of effeminate characters, followed by a textual analysis of representative cinematic works.

The first chapter examines male prostitutes in the 1950s, contextualizing it within the discourse of "sexual liberation." Following Japan's defeat in the war, what flourished were cultures of defeat, which commodified and celebrated corporeal pleasure and baseborn status, including male prostitution. By analyzing self-regulation records and representations, the chapter highlights the paradoxical role of male prostitutes, oscillating between obscenity and popularity, corruption and liberation. These representations construct and embody the dissolution of gender norms, illustrating the changes in sexual mores and their consumability.

The second chapter explores the representation of the modern boy in Japanese romantic films. The modern boy was a pre-war cultural imagination, a response to the

changing ideas of femininity and masculinity amidst modernization. In post-war Japanese cinema, this image of the modern boy was revisited to negotiate with democratic reforms and gender equality. The modern boy played a crucial role in mediating different meanings and reactions, allowing for the negotiation of modernity and questioning of Western dandified masculinity.

The third chapter analyzes the sisterboy craze of 1957 and how effeminacy was turned into a commodifiable spectacle. The phenomenon is explored in two ways. First, through a historical overview of media attention to the sisterboy, which suggests that the phenomenon was fueled by cinematic and media interests in scandalizing non-normative sexuality. Second, through textual analyses of films, to investigate how the sisterboy was represented on screen and consumed by the audience. The chapter argues that the sisterboy boom transformed extraordinary bodies into safe and consumable images that generate affective sensations.

The fourth chapter delves into the representation of gay boys in Japanese films since 1958. The rise in visibility of gay images was the product of various changes in the post-war Japanese sexual landscape, including the Prostitution Prevention Law's enforcement, the gay boom of 1958, and the restructuring of the Film Ethics Regulation Control Committee (the *Eirin*). This heightened visibility of gay boys provided a safe way to consume the transgressive and Japan's subjugated state in films.

The fifth and final chapter centers on the yakuza film's popularity in the 1960s and its portrayal of effeminate characters within a homosocial environment. Promoting traditional values and masculinity to highlight Japan's agency, the yakuza film's widespread popularity emerged amidst the country's global geopolitical renegotiation. The inclusion of effeminacy as an active generator of desire possesses the potential to

expose how the homosocial consumption of idolizing male bodies requires a constant rejection of effeminacy.

Chapter 1

Male Prostitutes:

Between Condemnation and Liberation[20]

In Shōchiku's *Jiyū gakkō* (*School of Freedom*, 1951), a film adaptation of Shishi Bunroku's satirical novel, the visualization of male prostitutes (*danshō*) embodies the corruption of Japan's sexual mores after the defeat. In an iconic montage sequence, runaway husband Iosuke (Saburi Shin), as well as the audience, is dragged around the subterranean world of Tokyo by Kajiki (Ozawa Eitarō), an ultra-nationalist who claims to be a former officer of Imperial Japan. Kajiki believes that Japan's decay and confusion are epitomized by the margins of society such as gambling houses, no-tell motels, cabarets, and brothels. Documentary-like footages of such problematic sights are rapidly cut together with vehemently loud music to highlight their scandalous nature. After the glimpse into the underworld, Iosuke takes a rest at a public bath in which, to his surprise, male prostitutes are washing their bodies. A reaction shot of Iosuke comically emphasizes his uneasiness and astonishment. By the end of the sequence, he utterly concurs with Kajiki's resentment at the moral bankruptcy in post-war Japan. For the characters, the defeat is equated with the degeneracy of sexual mores and the dissolution of the traditional gender order.

It is true that male prostitutes were commonly seen in Japan after the defeat, but their strong presence suggests something more than a mere embodiment of moral decay.[21]

[20] This research uses "prostitute" for historical accuracy. Sex worker is a less stigmatizing term but includes many other practices, such as stripping and pornographic filmmaking, that are not applicable to the context of the 1950s.

[21] Male prostitution is certainly not a post-war phenomenon. For a detailed historical account, see

The immediate post-war period can be characterized by what Mark McLelland calls, "an apparent 'boom' in male prostitution" (*Queer Japan* 74). Although sex workers who garnered much attention during this period were *panpan* (female prostitutes who catered mostly to American GIs), male prostitution was also widespread, and sexual service hubs were established at places like Ueno.[22] The presence of cross-dressed men catering to customer's sexual needs was scandalously reported in the mainstream press and *kasutori* magazines.[23] Despite being regarded as obscene by heteronormative society, *danshō* became popular due to their increased visibility.

The equivocality of *danshō* as a problem and a popular commodity requires a careful treatment of their media visibility. How do representations of male prostitutes negotiate the balance between obscenity and popularity, as well as condemnation and liberation? This chapter responds to this question by situating them in the discourse of "sexual liberation" after the defeat, a social and cultural reaction to the regained ownership of the body from the military regime. Previous film studies research has mostly focused on women's bodies in relation to discourses surrounding sexual liberation, and serious scrutiny of men's bodies has not been done. Having said that, as suggested by *Jiyū gakkō*'s montage sequence, a man's body, albeit an effeminate one, was certainly part of the negotiation of body and sexuality.

This chapter examines four filmic texts from the 1950s, particularly their self-regulation records and representations of male prostitutes. The record of self-regulation is effective in discovering how much *danshō*'s visibility was deemed to be obscene and

Pflugfelder.

[22] Male prostitutes during the immediate post-war period catered primarily to male clients.

[23] The most notable incident happened on November 22, 1947 at Ueno Park, where a group of male prostitutes started a riot against the police officers who were wiping out the area. Resulted in the arrests of five prostitutes, the incident was widely reported in the newspaper with photographs.

threatening. Actual representations also need to be examined to uncover how dominant cultures imagined and consumed male prostitutes. Through these analyses, the chapter contends that the treatment of *danshō* in the films is paradoxical as they critique the corruption of public morals by using male prostitutes, while simultaneously treating them as consumable objects of pleasure. Male prostitutes on screen offer viewers an opportunity to embrace the dissolution of the gender order so that the changes in sexual mores can be recognizable and consumable.

Politics of the Body after the Defeat

The immediate post-war period is frequently described as having drastic changes in sexual mores and in bodily regulations. Suddenly released from the regulatory wartime regime, Japanese citizens regained ownership of their bodies. For them, free from the physical and spiritual oppression during wartime, bodily pleasure and sexual freedom became essential as symbols of liberation. As illustrated by McLelland, "Many people were keen to forget the past and looked forward to the beginning of a new and newly private life in which eroticism was flaunted as an important symbol of liberation" (*Queer Japan* 59). In the aftermath of the war, eroticism gave people the potential to build something new and become self-reliant on their bodies.[24]

The focus on the body and eroticism gave rise to new cultures and expressions by marginalized groups. According to John W. Dower, "The most flamboyant early expression of the casting off of despair and the creation of new space was to be found on

[24] For the detailed account on the transition from the national body to the carnal body, see Kato ("Kissing").

the margins of 'respectable society'" (122). Among newly-formed subcultures, *panpan*, the black market, and the *kasutori* magazine (a short-lived and cheaply printed magazine with sensational content) are especially notable (Dower 122). These cultural and social expressions – what Dower calls cultures of defeat – "came to exemplify not merely the confusion and despair of the *kyodatsu* [disorientation] condition, but also the vital, visceral, even carnal transcending of it" (Dower 122–123). The cultures of defeat are not merely a manifestation of hardships and difficulties after the defeat, but also a testament to the resilience and defiance of the marginalized groups who expressed themselves through bodily pleasure and sexuality.

Having said that, the cultural expression of eroticism, which is frequently referred to as sexual liberation in post-war Japan, should be treated cautiously and critically. This is because what seems to be liberational on the surface can turn out to be oppressive in actuality. Take representations of *panpan*, for example. Although the powerful presence of *panpan* can be seen as "the liberation of repressed sensuality" (Dower 133), it is highly contentious *whose* liberation female prostitutes served to liberate. Tamura Taijirō's famous literary work *Nikutai no mon* (*Gate of Flesh*, 1947), for instance, seems to celebrate the unapologetic pursuit of bodily pleasure by *panpan*. Yet, "sexual liberation" depicted in so-called *nikutai bungaku* (the Literature of the Flesh) is devoid of female subjectivity. According to Douglas Slaymaker,

> Their [the flesh writers] liberation is gendered, dependent […] on a sexualized woman's body-as-object discovered by a virile man-as-actor. Much of this […] was motivated by the writers' own sense of marginalization, and, in particular, their anxiety over emasculation during the crisis of male identity accompanying

defeat and occupation. (14)

Despite the potential defiance of the cultures of defeat, male writers often appropriated women's bodies and sexualities, reducing them to mere tools for the restoration of male subjects.

Furthermore, film studies research on the female body reveals how women's liberated bodies are often depicted in a manner that condemns and represses them, perpetuated by male perspectives and ideologies. For example, Kamiya Makiko analyzes *panpan* films, in which despite the emphasis on women's physicalities, their sexualities are negated eventually (170). The denial of women's sexualities results from the films' judgmental quality, which encourages the reformation of female prostitutes through the use of Christian symbols (Kamiya 164–167). The ideological significance of *panpan* films is that the salvation of sinful women from prostitution is read as an analogy of the defeated nation which needs to be reformed from past misbehaviors (Kamiya 170). Instead of focusing on the experiences of women, the treatment of prostitution implies the displacement of male and national anxiety onto the bodies of female prostitutes. In these cases, sexual liberation only provides a temporary emancipation as it is strongly tied to men's desire to regain patriarchal power to take control of the gender order after the war.[25]

The contrasting narratives of condemnation and liberation of the female body in literature and film are two sides of the same coin, both shaped and dominated by male responses to drastic societal changes. Some negatively see those changes as the

[25] For other feminist film criticism on sexual liberation and women's body in Japanese cinema, see Izbicki and González-López.

dissolution of the masculine order, whereas some take them as a useful means to take advantage of the carnal body to articulate a defeated male subject. If so, uncritically celebrating sexual liberation cannot function as an effective criticism as long as it serves to perpetuate a masculine ideology that negates female subjectivity. Rather, the discourse of sexual liberation should be understood as an indication of how (predominantly male) producers of culture oscillate between condemnation and liberation in dealing with the defeat.

The social and cultural discourse on *danshō* is also marked by such an ambivalent attitude that oscillates between condemnation and liberation. On the one hand, public gaze directed towards male prostitutes reduced them to an abjected other of the defeated nation. One of the prominent narratives produced by mass media was "the idea that the trauma of Japan's defeat had demasculinized Japanese men, leading to an increase in passive male homosexuality and a predisposition toward masochism, most clearly exemplified in an upsurge in male cross-dressing prostitution" (McLelland, *Love* 154). For example, Sumi Tatsuya who delivered an evocative account of Ueno sex workers in *Danshō no mori* (*Grove of Male Prostitutes*, 1949), observes that cross-dressed prostitutes are a unique characteristic of the defeated nation (216). Furthermore, psychiatrist Minami Takao's analysis indicates that the emergence of male cross-dressed prostitutes results from a social upheaval after the defeat (298). What these contemporary accounts suggest is that male prostitution was considered as an abject symptom of the defeated nation.

On the other hand, some scholars actively examine the potential of male prostitutes beyond being objects of condemnation in post-war Japan. To respond to the popular imagination which confines *danshō* within the realm of pathology, sociocultural research has been conducted to consider if the representations can challenge

heteronormative discourses surrounding them. McLelland, for instance, analyzes mainstream and *kasutori* magazine articles which covered "perverse" sexuality, commonly referred to as *ryōki* (curiosity hunting). Acknowledging that *kasutori* magazines played a major role in strengthening the association between male prostitution and the defeat, McLelland highlights that the *ryōki* paradigm treated *danshō* as "the confusion but also the vitality of the early postwar years" (*Love* 155). McLelland describes the vitality of male prostitutes positively as "a site of resistance to state-sanctioned discourses of 'correct' sexuality" (*Love* 154). Furthermore, Todd A. Henry contends that media interest in male prostitution granted them the power to speak about their experiences publicly. On the one hand, it is true that the commodification of *danshō* in the pulp press allowed "fascinated readers to participate, if vicariously, in the queer world of Tokyo's public sites" (404). On the other hand, roundtable discussions among *danshō* set up by the media successfully offered a space for speaking about "the embodied experiences and circumscribed agency of cross-dressed male sex workers as speaking and acting subjects" (Henry 409). Therefore, media reports on *danshō* did not merely condemn prostitution but offered a space where heteronormative discourses are, though partially, challenged.

Danshō's media visibility is double-sided, encompassing both condemnation and liberation. While contemporary media and writers often portrayed male prostitutes as a symbol of Japan's post-war corruption, they also attracted significant attention from the media and its audiences, providing them with a platform to challenge the prevailing discourses. The discursive construction of male prostitutes after the defeat can be seen as a case wherein the production of power simultaneously creates space for resistance.

How does the cinematic visibility of *danshō* take part in the discursive formation

of sexual liberation? The following analyses of regulation material and film texts reveal the equivocality of *danshō*. On the regulatory level, the depiction of male prostitution in films was only regulated superficially and its disruptive qualities were more or less tolerated. On a textual level, the comedic treatment of male prostitutes allows the viewers to embrace the changes in sexual mores.

(Not) Regulating "Perversion"

This section examines the records of self-regulation in the following titles: Kawashima Yuzō's *Joyū to meitantei* (*The Actress and the Detective*, 1950), *Jiyū gakkō*, Abe Yutaka's *Dai-8 kanbō* (*Cell No. 8*, 1956), and Ozawa Shigehiro's *Keishichō monogatari: Yoru no yajū* (*Police Department Story: Night Beasts*, 1957). In *Joyū to meitantei*, a detective is kissed by a cross-dressed man whom he mistakes for somebody else. As already mentioned, *Jiyū gakkō* introduces a group of male prostitutes in the public bath. Lily (Tsuboi Kenji) in *Dai-8 kanbō* is picked up by an elderly man on the street who later realizes Lily's "true" gender identity at the police station. And in *Yoru no yajū* as well, a cross-dressed man (Karube Shōji) drops by the police station to cooperate with a criminal investigation. Evidential statuses of what makes these characters male prostitutes are based on their roles in opening credits or scripts. How did the authority, or more specifically the self-regulation committee in the film industry, respond to such possibly threatening figures who unashamedly embody non-normative sexuality?

Film censorship in post-war Japan is closely tied to the policy of the General Headquarters (GHQ). After the conclusion of World War II, the Occupation forces occupied Japan from August 28 to democratize the "uncivilized" nation. As a means to

appropriately monitor the process of democratization, the GHQ begun censoring cultural products which include films. As described by Kyoko Hirano, "It was America's duty to tackle the difficult job of transforming the uncivilized Japanese nation into a civilized fellow citizen of the world. Films were to become instrumental in bringing about this change" (39). For the purpose of prohibiting and recommending some subject matters, a double censorship was enforced by the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) and the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD).[26] Simultaneously, Japan was expected to grow up to be an autonomous nation with a film industry that is capable of regulating film contents. To achieve this end, the CIE closely communicated with industry representatives from 1946 and started drafting a Japanese motion picture code, based on the Hollywood model (H. Kitamura 47). In June 1949, the Film Ethics Regulation Control Committee (commonly referred to as the *Eirin*) was established as the self-regulatory organization of the Japanese film industry, along with the implementation of the Motion Picture Code of Ethics. From this moment on, Japanese films were voluntarily regulated by Japanese themselves as a symbol of democratic progress along with GHQ's continued involvement in monitoring processes. This old-*Eirin* period, in which the regulatory committee existed within the industry, continued until the end of 1956 when an abundance of problematic film content caused the public to have suspicion about the *Eirin*'s credibility and led to its reorganization as a third-party institution. The transition from double censorship to self-regulation is a tangible example of Japan's maturation into a "civilized" nation.

In regulating the depiction of male prostitutes, the committee's belief was

[26] The CIE first approved film projects and scripts. Once films were completed, they had to go through civilian censorship by the CIE and military censorship by the CCD (Hirano 40–41). For details, see Hirano.

ambiguous. On the one hand, the Japanese production code did problematize any deviation from normative sexuality. In Article 3 of Section 6 where matters concerning sex and sexuality were addressed, it was clearly stated, "Do not depict activities based on sexual deviancy or perverted sexual desire" (Eirin 186). However, the prohibitive description raises questions more than illustrating the *Eirin*'s stance on sexuality. What did "sexual deviancy," "perverted sexual desire," and, above all, "activities" mean? Was sexual deviancy itself not a problem unless there was any action caused by perversion? How did the committee draw a line between activities based on one's perverted sexuality and ones that are not? Their ambiguous stance becomes more evident when the production code is compared with the Hollywood "original." Enforced from 1934, the Hays Code states that "[s]*ex perversion* or any inference of it is forbidden" (Doherty 353).[27] This is a clearer example in which any suggestion of perversion is simply disallowed. Statements of this level of intelligibility are absent in the Motion Picture Code of Ethics in Japan. It is even unclear if male prostitutes were regarded to be sexual deviant in the first place. According to Endō Tatsuo, one of the members of the regulatory committee, the only matters discussed regarding Article 3 of Section 6 were if cross-dressers and male prostitutes would fall under this section (93). This historical account indicates that there was a categorial confusion regarding which measures should be taken to properly regulate male prostitutes.[28] Although it is frequently noted that the Motion Picture Code of Ethics is based on the Hollywood model (Endō 48), such categorical confusion implies the

[27] Highlighted in the original.

[28] Other regulatory categorifies which could serve to supervise sexual deviance are Article 1 and 2 of Section 5 about obscenity. Article 1 of Section 5 notes, "Do not depict obscene words, actions, costumes, references, songs, and jokes among others even if they could be understood only by a small number of the audience" (Eirin 186). Article 2 of Section 5 notes, "Be cautious of the treatment of nudity, change of clothes, bodily exposure, dancing, and bedrooms, not to stimulate the audience's carnal pleasure" (Eirin 186).

Eirin's ambiguity in attitude and possible relative indifference to regulating "perverse" content, including *danshō*. Their lack of concern for non-normative sexualities could stem from the policy of their parent organization, the GHQ. As stated by McLelland, "The censors clearly did not consider either homosexuality or male prostitution to be problematic per se since numerous accounts can be found in both the mainstream and *kasutori* press" (*Love* 155). Sexual perversion in general was treated unevenly without serious consideration of why it should be regulated since it was not regarded as a considerable threat to the public.[29]

Actual regulatory material concerning the representation of male prostitutes reflect the categorical uncertainty of the committee's stance on "perverse" content. Take, for example, the case of *Joyū to meitantei*, theatrically released on December 9, 1950. The draft script was submitted to the regulatory committee on November 9 and the examination was completed on November 14. At this point, no change was requested as the early draft did not contain the scene with the cross-dresser (Eiga Rinri, *Eiga 17* a-17).[30] Upon the completion of the film, the completed version was screened for the *Eirin* examiners on December 1. The following comment is recorded regarding the second regulatory procedure: "Scene with male prostitute: due to negative impact on society, requested for deletion and [the request has been] executed (three feet)" (Eiga Rinri, *Eiga* 18 b-13). The record is clear evidence that the regulation of the cross-dressing prostitute was due to the possible social impact of obscenity and perverted sexuality. However, the rest of the film proves otherwise. The forceful kiss of the cross-dresser is evidently present, which makes it unclear what kind of obscenity was requested for deletion. Although the

[29] Instead, women's sexuality and nudity became a topic of ethical discussions due to the emergence of films about teenage girls' sexuality, notably *Jūdai no seiten* (*Teenager's Sex Manual*, 1953) (Endō 103).

[30] The draft script is available at the Shōchiku Ōtani Library.

deletion itself must have been executed as recorded in the document, it is questionable how much the removal of three feet (approximately two seconds) has contributed to reducing "the negative impact" of the scene in question.

The prostitutes in *Jiyū gakkō* were treated in a similar fashion. No alternation was requested on the first script examination (Eiga Rinri, *Eiga 21* a-6–a-7). After the second examination of the completed film, however, the *Eirin* "requested to delete a part (twelve feet) of the bathroom sequence with cross-dressed men and [the request has been] executed" (Eiga Rinri, *Eiga 22* a-11). The document illustrates the fact that some parts of the scene (approximately eight seconds) were deleted. Having said that, the rest of the film still captures the naked bodies of the cross-dressers above their chests. Though one can only speculate what had been regarded obscene and which part's deletion was requested, the surviving footages of the male prostitutes raise questions concerning the efficacy of measures taken by the *Eirin* to regulate filmic content. They certainly did ask for the deletion of some scenes, but they did not ask for the deletion of "obscenity."[31]

The regulatory committee's stance to regulate but not regulate obscenity exposes the superficiality of ethical considerations. Ethical issues regarding sexual perversion were raised without any clear understanding of how it could be threatening. In other words, the fact that films went through the necessary procedures was prioritized over specific guidance on which depictions should be permitted or disallowed. The *Eirin*'s unclear stance could be informed by its position within the industry. According to Kirsten Cather Fischer, "From its earliest days, Eirin was perpetually dogged by accusations that it was either a front for the studios or one for the state" (80). The *Eirin* was innately

[31] The draft script of *Dai-8 kanbō* was "requested to be cautious of the treatment of male prostitutes, not to become exceedingly vulgar" (Eiga Rinri, *Eiga 78* 8).

compromising in that, on the one hand, they were tasked to oversee subject matters of Japanese films as a regulatory committee and, on the other hand, they could not enforce stricter regulations as a voluntary organization within the industry. The committee's attachment to both the state and the industry could have resulted in the ambiguous regulation of male prostitutes; while records show that certain obscene content was deleted, such content still remains, existing on celluloid today. The regulation of *danshō* is characterized by such duplicity, a misalignment between theory and practice. Although male prostitutes may have been considered obscene, they were deemed safe enough to remain in films.

Joking about the Defeat

The superficiality of regarding *danshō* as obscene is evident on a textual level as well. It is significant to remember that, in many representational forms, male prostitutes served a comedic role (Matsuda 21). This is especially true in cinematic representations in which their appearance is merely used for an instant joke. It indicates that they were not regarded as an imminent threat like *panpan*, on which male anxiety is displaced, nor can they provide any embodied experiences, in which *danshō*'s voices could be heard. When male prostitutes are treated as a joke to elicit laughter, it is essential to be cautious of what the audience is directed to laugh at. In other words, what are we laughing at when we are laughing at *danshō*?

It is difficult to draw a decisive conclusion on the political implications of laughter since different theories on comedy say different things. The superiority theory, for instance, perceives comedy as a means to consolidate social norms by ridiculing what

is socially regarded as inferior. According to Thomas Hobbes's much quoted analysis on laughter, "[T]he passion of laughter is nothing else but *sudden glory* arising from some sudden *conception* of some *eminency* in ourselves, by *comparison* with the *infirmity* of others, or with our own formerly" (46).[32] In this rather simplified theorization of comedy, laughter is purposed to make fun of the socially marginalized to generate a sense of superiority. In incongruity theories, on the other hand, it is regarded that humor comes from the clash of incompatible ideas. As James Beattie argues,

> Laughter arises from the view of two or more inconsistent, unsuitable, or incongruous parts or circumstances, considered as united in one complex object or assemblage, or as acquiring a sort of mutual relation from the peculiar manner in which the mind takes notice of them. (347)

The juxtaposition or mismatch of discordant elements can elicit humor that highlights contradictions in the social system and its absurdity. Furthermore, Sigmund Freud contends that one of the functions of comedy is offering social relief by making humorous references to taboo subjects. Joking about controversial ideas leads to "the introduction of the proscribed idea by means of an auditory perception, the cathectic energy used for the inhibition has now suddenly become superfluous and has been lifted, and is therefore now ready to be discharged by laughter" (Freud 149). This implies that comedy has an ideological function as it can alleviate social tensions by turning taboo topics into pleasurable jokes without disturbing the social order. These diverse academic discussions on comedy stress the political implications of laughter while its ideological effects are

[32] Italics are in the original.

largely contentious and context-dependent.

In what way can these theories on comedy be applicable to *danshō*? It is important to remember that the depiction of queer instances as funny can produce multiple meanings and effects. By treating non-heteronormative sexualities as objects of ridicule in film, laughter can augment a homophobic erasure of queer sexualities, as has been historically done. Acknowledging the violence of comedy, however, Maggie Hennefeld proposes the possibility of rearticulating and recuperating laughter in order to highlight the unrealized potential of queer moments in silent cinema. According to Hennefeld, "It is only through laughter's incommensurability […] that its unrealized past echoes can at last make their mark on the sexual politics of the present" (95). Not only do jokes violently redraw a boundary of what can be said and laughed off about homosexuality, queer reading practices can also benefit from laughter's openness to interpretation. In other words, the fact that jokes can be interpreted differently leads to the possible textual subversion of what is deemed to be funny.

The filmic representations of *danshō* are marked by power dynamics within abominable gags, constantly negotiating the lines between what is funny and not funny, and who is laughed at by whom. It is easy to conclude that, as the superiority theory argues, the comedic treatment of male prostitutes instantly affirms and validates the superiority of the majority. Without resorting to a homophobic justification of hateful jokes, however, laughter caused by *danshō* does have the potential to make viewers look at Japan's post-defeat social formation in a different light, be it through combining incongruous elements or referring to social taboos. The following textual analyses underline the possibility of these films having a kind of self-deprecating humor that temporarily makes fun of the upheaval of the gender order in Japan. The cinematic

representation of *danshō* is a convenient means of making the changes in sexual mores become recognizable, and self-deprecating humors offer these moments as a form of entertainment.

Cinematic functions of male prostitutes are characterized as the following comic routine: "female" characters come into sight (often from the perspective of the main characters) only to be unveiled that they are no "women" after all. The classic joke works precisely because it is purposed to betray the audience's expectation regarding the gender of the introduced character. *Danshō* causes gender misrecognition and the films seem to welcome it as a good joke. The question is, when a sudden exposure of "true" gender generates laughter, what becomes the butt of a joke: the one who performs the "wrong" gender, the one who misrecognizes the "correct" gender, or both?

In *Yoru no yajū*, a male prostitute is the butt of a joke. It is not just a kind of joke that makes fun of their gender presentation, but a joke that underscores queer sexuality only to silence it. The film is the sixth installment of the popular film series *Keishichō monogatari*, in which a group of police officers solve a case using scientific means. In *Yoru no yajū*, a woman's purse left at the crime scene becomes one of the keys to crack the case. The point is, however, that the owner of the purse was no woman after all. In one scene, a *danshō*, attired in a fashionable plaid jacket, visits the police station to pick up the purse and cooperate with the investigation. Signaled by the arrival of the owner of the purse, the camera swiftly pans to the figure of the *danshō*, whose appearance betrays normative gender assumptions about the purse's owner. The medium long shot effectively captures the awkward moment in which the officers are slightly taken aback. Despite the surprising entry, the officers conventionally proceed with interview questions until the prostitute makes eyes at one officer. The following two shot discloses reactions of the

officers, one of which expresses a jeering look on his face and silently pokes fun at the seduced colleague. This discriminatory look quickly subsides as the other officers proceed with the investigation out of professional necessity.

A political implication of comedy in the sequence is providing both the allowance and prohibition for viewers to laugh at the *danshō*'s presence. Although the officers' duty to practice professionalism disallows them to treat male prostitutes as objects of ridicule, the two shot with the deriding look alludes to comical effects, allowing viewers to giggle at the prostitute. Their possible involvement with criminal activities associates prostitution with the disorder in post-war Japan, but its possible threat is readily discharged by laughter. It is telling that the scene does not merely offer a humor but creates a discourse of silence, a kind of silence that introduces what cannot be talked about only to reaffirm that it is something that should not be talked about. *Yoru no yajū* introduces *danshō* to viewers only to treat them as objects of laughter.

Laughter in *Dai-8 kanbō*, on the other hand, stems from the misrecognition of gender performance. This is done by marking a clear difference in the possession of information between the audience and a character. Based on Shibata Renzaburō's novella of the same name, it is a romantic thriller that portrays the pursuit of love against the backdrop of the growth of a criminal organization. *Danshō* Lily is characterized as a comical sign of such criminality from the very first appearance when they actively look for customers on a street. Although Lily's sexual advance is treated unworthy of recognition by the protagonist, who swiftly walks through the street, the camera keeps capturing the male prostitute until Kawahara, an elderly drunk man, suddenly appears and finds them attractive. In this scene, Lily's unfamiliarly high-pitched voice exposes the "true" gender of the prostitute while Kawahara's intoxication causes him to misrecognize

Lily's gender. It is several scenes later at the police station that Kawahara is informed of the prostitute's "true" gender while accusing them of theft. Captured in a medium long shot that crampedly frames Lily and Kawahara lowering their eyes and reprimanded by the officers, the scene ridicules both parties in a more or less equal manner. Its subtle humor stems from both individuals, the one who performs the "wrong" gender and the one who is incapable of seeing through it. On the other hand, the audience is allowed to indulge themselves in a safe laughing position as an omnipotent viewer who knows exactly what is happening. In other words, the film situates the spectator in a superior position, like the police officers, where prior knowledge about the gender transgression is given beforehand. Gender misrecognition remains to be an object of comedy in *Dai-8 kanbō* while sustaining the audience's privileged position as a giggling viewer.

Shōchiku's *Jiyū gakkō* is a more complicated case in which its comic effect is intertwined with the visual pleasure of looking at something queer. As described in the beginning, the scene with a group of *danshō* is part of a montage sequence in which ultranationalist Kajiki laments the corruption of sexual mores after the defeat. The sequence is, however, multi-layered due to the disjuncture between the images and the narration. The audience is first introduced to the male prostitutes when Iosuke soaks in the public bath. As high-pitched speaking voices are inserted and the protagonist turns to the speakers, the film is cut to Iosuke's point-of-view shot where a group of prostitutes are neatly brushing their fingernails and sharing their embarrassment at touching up their make-up at the crowded public bath. The reaction shot that follows captures Iosuke's surprise and uneasiness, after which a shot of *otoko-yu* (the men's bath) is deliberately inserted to highlight the otherness of the *danshō*. As the protagonist is utterly convinced of the moral delinquency of Japan after the sequence, the film seems to treat the male

prostitutes as an apparent threat to the gender order.

Stylistically speaking, however, the sequence is meant to be entertaining. The satirical nature of the sequence comes from Kajiki's utter seriousness oddly combined with the voyeuristic pleasure of the spectator. Rapidly cut, the film responds to the audience's desire to look at something that should be prohibited. On a superficial level, Kajiki's disturbing narration provides a severe critique to post-war bodily liberation as the corruption of sexual mores. On another level, however, social criticism is reduced to a mere excuse to visually introduce expressions of unethical and bodily pleasure that seems morally scandalous yet dangerously attractive. Despite Kajiki's recognition of such low cultures as lamentable symbols of the defeat, the film simultaneously allows viewers to peep at the exact cultures that are criticized. Iosuke's exposure to Tokyo's "dark side," therefore, offers a voyeuristic experience for the audience to consume and remember the images of post-war obscenity (Tazoe 196). The appearance of *danshō*'s presence at the bathhouse is part of indiscreet charms of the disorder.

The contradiction of what the scene says and how it says it makes the politics of laughter more complicated than it seems. On the one hand, as the superiority theory goes, the male prostitutes are reduced to being objects of ridicule. Their screen presence is only possible through the disdainful gaze of the protagonist, which humorously emphasizes their non-normativity. Having said that, it can be also argued that Iosuke also becomes the butt of the joke. The humor is produced by his naivety of not knowing about the prevalence of obscenity in post-war Japan in general and at the bathhouse in particular. Like in *Dai-8 kanbō*, the audience knows more than the character knows and is allowed to laugh at Iosuke's chasteness as an omnipotent viewer. Furthermore, and more importantly, Kajiki and his narration generate another layer to the sequence's laughter.

His absolute seriousness to criticize Japan's moral decay is betrayed by the pleasurable images the sequence offers, which reduces his extreme political view to a disarranged one. It is telling that humor is caused by the incongruity of dialogues and images, narration and style. It is in this incompatibility that the possibility of self-deprecating humor emerges: that is, the sequence is not merely making fun of specific characters, but also of how the discourse of sexual liberation is produced. The comical dissonance of style and narration in the sequence leaves room for critical judgment on how the changes in sexual mores are thought to be immoral, reducing such reactionary criticism to be shallow and laughable.

A more powerful instance of self-deprecating humor can be seen in *Joyū to meitantei*, in which the audience is also invited to be a target of teasing. The scene in question is part of a larger sequence in which a detective looks for a female thief. Going out to the streets of Ginza, he, assuming they are the culprit, talks to several different women wearing plaid jackets with handbags identical to the thief's. The next long shot captures another person, dressed similarly to the thief, smoking by a river. As the detective grabs the suspect by the arms, it is cut to a medium close-up shot in which the person turns around, and the "true" gender of a cross-dresser is unveiled. With the intention of "playing" with the flabbergasted detective, the possible male prostitute answers him favorably with an impetuous kiss on the lips.

What generates humor in the five-second-long scene is the detective's incorrect gender attribution to the prostitute. The film strategically starts to set up the joke earlier in the sequence where the detective misidentifies the thief by disturbing the women with the same attire as the suspect. As the next shot introduces another person with the same outfit, the audience is led to attribute the female gender to the prostitute. Furthermore, the

impression of the introduced figure, smoking with a pencil skirt and high heels, is identical to the iconography associated with *panpan*.[33] Such visual information functions to build up expectations of the introduced individual to be female. When the prostitute turns around and reveals their face and voice, the fallacy of such gender assumption is exposed while those who are misguided are comically punished by a passionate kiss.

The *danshō*'s sudden reveal of their biological sex in *Joyū to meitantei* suggests multiple objects of derision, complicating who is laughing at whom. It is certainly true that the homophobic/transphobic joke heavily relies on the incongruence between the prostitute's biological sex and performed gender. That being said, this conclusion is too simplistic as the medium close-up attends to the faces of both the deceiving prostitute and the deceived detective. In that sense, the joke is also on the detective who naively gave credence to the credibility of his gender attribution. Moreover, the viewer cannot keep their position as innocent observers either since they are guided to be fooled by the prostitute as much as the detective is. Unlike *Dai-8 kanbō* and *Jiyū gakkō* in which the omnipotent viewer could enjoy the humor without being laughed at, *Joyū to meitantei* teases their audience as well, who can laugh at their own gender misrecognition. The film's ridicule redirects the focus of laughter by making the audience themselves become the butt of the joke for their failure to correctly attribute gender appropriately. In other words, the scene offers an instance of self-deprecating humor where the fallacy of gender attribution is temporarily exposed and the confusion itself is consumed as a pleasurable joke.

What these filmic examples imply is that pleasure has an ideological function as

[33] According to Irene González-López, distinctive aesthetics of *panpan* include a "permanent wave hair style with a wide pompadour, pencil skirt with nylon panties and high heels, thick make-up, cigarettes and chewing gum" (176).

jokes about aggressive sexuality are not for *danshō* themselves. The question is whose pleasure *danshō*'s sexuality serves and the answer depends on the ideology behind each text and the power dynamic of who is laughing at whom behind each joke. Overall, it is questionable how much the filmic superficial portrayals of male prostitutes can challenge established norms. It should certainly not be mistaken as the liberation of sexual minorities as the characters can never claim to be speaking and embodied subjects. However, it is possible to see the emergence of self-deprecating humor as the films make a good joke out of the post-war disorder. These representations of *danshō* are not meant to enhance the recognition of queer individuals but to underline a disorderly post-defeat condition as a means to make sense of it. To that end, *danshō*'s laughter is part of the discourse of sexual liberation, offering a popular fantasy of Japan's promiscuity, that male subjects are dismantled, that the nation is symbolized by prostitution. In that regard, humor is efficacious not only in problematizing the unsettled gender order, but also in producing discursive constructions of post-war Japan as the gender disorder and in presenting such state of confusion as something consumable and acceptable.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed film regulation documents and film texts to examine how the cinematic representation of male prostitutes oscillates between condemnation and liberation. The representational pattern of *danshō* is contradictory in that it acknowledges and often highlights their obscenity and otherness while exploiting them for the enjoyment of viewers. Such paradoxical stance can be seen in the *Eirin*'s ambiguous handling of perverse content in both theory and practice. On a textual level as well, male

prostitutes are objects of laughter, offering a pleasurable joke that can be consumed for its possible temporary exposure of the constructedness of gender norms. The filmic construction of *danshō*'s image renders them more familiar than threatening, making the gender disorder recognizable and consumable. Male prostitutes are part of, as Dower calls them, the cultures of defeat; despite (or because of) their obscenity, their sexuality and vitality can look attractive in the aftermath of war.

What characterizes sexual liberation is that, during the process of the reconfiguration of gender identity of the defeated nation, much attention was devoted to something unconventional rather than normative. Having said that, *danshō* was not the only character type that allowed the negotiation of masculine norms. Supposedly-heterosexual manliness needed to be refined and transformed for the purpose of adopting itself to the post-war society, constructed by the Occupation forces. Discussed in the next chapter is how such negotiation was done on the representation of what I call the modern boy.

Chapter 2

The Modern Boy:

A Performer of Modernity

The undermining of sexual mores in post-war Japan is not only evident in the cinematic representation of male prostitutes discussed in the previous chapter, but also in the prevalence of romance among modern young couples in films. This is exemplified by the couple Hori Takafumi (Sada Keiji) and Fujimura Yuri (Awashima Chikage) in Shōchiku's *Jiyū gakkō*, who parody modernity with their aggressive sexualities, gaudy Western clothes, over-the-top bodily movements, and eccentric verbal expressions like *tondemo happun* (no way). Notably, Takafumi defies the male gender code, using women's language and sporting manicured nails. One source of humor in *Jiyū gakkō* is his fervent wooing of the older female protagonist, Komako, whose traditional marital values are contrasted to Takafumi and Yuri's. Eloquently described by Yuri as a "candy boy" – all wrapping and nothing inside – Takafumi is only interested in his looks and romance, which makes him a modern sissified man who lacks psychological maturity.

Takafumi is a good example for illustrating how producers of culture imagined that modernity promotes the intersection of romantic freedom and effeminacy in men. While his presentation may be seen as gender-transgressing, he still has a heterosexual desire to be dominated by mature women. Additionally, his effeminate manner is an appropriation of Japanese modern behavior that imitates and exaggerates Western courtship practices. Together, these different concepts – effeminacy, romance, and modernity – converge in the character of, what this research refers to as, the modern boy.

This chapter raises the question of what this cultural association between effeminacy and romance suggests about Japan's post-war modern experiences.

One common approach to analyzing screen depictions of effeminacy is to view them as connotative indications of homosexuality. Since sissiness is widely understood as a sign of unspeakable sexuality in Hollywood cinema, the modern boy could be regarded as the Japanese equivalent of the sissy.[34] That being said, this chapter avoids a homosexual interpretation of sissiness for two reasons. First, as discussed in the previous chapter, the self-regulatory committee took issue with the depiction of the male prostitutes in Shōchiku's *Jiyū gakkō*, but did not express similar concerns about Takafumi's sissified behavior. It implies that effeminacy's possible association with homosexuality was not widely shared or was overlooked due to his aggressive heterosexual desire. Second, and more importantly, a homosexual interpretation of sissiness reinforces a stereotype that effeminacy is symptomatic of homosexuality. Rather than perpetuating the possibly damaging idea that effeminacy is a negative stereotype in need of correction, Jonathan A. Allan suggests embracing effeminacy as a positive identity to "recuperate the feminine" (77). While this chapter does not make a decisive argument on the identity of effeminate men, regarding sissiness as a gay stereotype does limit the meaning of effeminacy. Effeminacy can signify various meanings in different contexts, including but not limited to homosexuality and heterosexuality.

In this chapter, effeminacy is explored as a form of performance that conveys understandings of and reactions to modernity. Drawing on the pre-war image of the modern boy or *mobo* for theoretical support, this chapter considers effeminate characters

[34] Kubo Yutaka takes such an approach while arguing that Takafumi's sissiness in Shōchiku's *Jiyū gakkō* is accepted by the self-regulatory committee due to the narrative that ultimately reinforces a heteronormative framework through the final formation of a romantic union between the couple ("'Shibu-Jii'" 287).

like Takafumi as a post-war iteration of the image, reintroduced amidst a social atmosphere that prized gender equality which was promoted by the Occupation forces. In particular, this chapter analyzes both the social context and the representation of the modern boy. First, it introduces the historical research of the *M + W jidai* (the Age of M + W) and the popularization of effeminacy by the press in 1955. It follows up with a textual analysis of the representation of the modern boy in Japanese cinema from the early 1950s to the early 1960s, a period when equality among romantic couples was explored through romantic films. The modern boy can be understood as a performer of modernity, through which various reactions to and critiques of democratic values and women's rising social status are articulated.

Romance and Democracy

The emergence of the modern boy in post-war Japan is closely tied to the societal reformation that occurred following Japan's defeat in World War II, particularly the promotion of gender equality by the Occupation forces. This section provides a brief overview of the historical context in order to illustrate how romance and proper courtship (micro-level expressions of gender equality) were viewed as democratic practices and how films played a role in mediating these modern experiences.

During the Occupation of Japan, one of the initiatives implemented by the GHQ was the promotion of gender equality as a means to democratize the supposedly uncivilized nation. Such measures were taken to "reform an antidemocratic family system considered by the Americans to be a root cause of the militarism and fascism that had led to the war" (Pharr 222). For the purpose of dismantling the patriarchal *ie* system and

elevating the status of women, the Constitution was heavily revised by the GHQ. As a result, Article 14 of the 1947 Constitution prohibited any discrimination "because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin," and Article 24 stated, "Marriage shall be based on the mutual consent of both sexes" and choice of spouse and "other matters pertaining to marriage and the family" were to be "enacted from the standpoint of individual dignity and the essential equality of the sexes" (Pharr 224–225). On a constitutional level, marriage equality came to be regarded as a basic human right for women, whose individual will became legally acknowledged.

As a result, couples started to perform democratic and gender-equal practices in their romantic relationships. With women legally able to choose their own spouses (on paper at least), Japanese men needed to learn how to treat them properly. Dating practices became learned behavior and those who were believed to be experts on courtship were none other than the Americans. Japanese notions of courtship were "radically overhauled during the Occupation period due to the sudden influx of American people and culture into the country" (McLelland, *Love* 96). In particular, Hollywood films with reorientational value, including the ones with kissing scenes, were believed to "show the Japanese how open societies with equality between the sexes operated" (Smulyan 57–59). Depictions of intimate relationships among couples in Hollywood films also influenced how Japanese onscreen lovers were depicted. Concerned about the lack of representation of physical intimacy in Japanese cinema, David Conde, the chief of the CIE, encouraged the inclusion of romantic scenes to release sexual repression and to promote free will (Usui 64–65). As kissing was promoted as a sign of democracy (Hirano, 252), *seppun eiga* (kissing films) went prominent, notably *Hatachi no seishun* (*A Twenty-Year-Old Youth*, 1946) released on May 23, which initiated a controversial debate on the legitimacy

of kissing among Japanese couples.[35] As a result of the sudden influx of new cultures, values, and behavior, young Japanese couples began incorporating appropriate courtship practices into their daily lives, through which democratic values could be expressed. It is therefore no overstatement that, "In modern Japan, romance propelled democracy" (Hirooka 246).

The implementation of gender equality in Japan, however, was not entirely progressive and did not receive unconditional acceptance from the Japanese populace. Although the newly-revised Constitution was "progressive for the time" (McLelland, *Love* 54), the limits of the Occupational reformation were frequently pointed out.[36] In the end, "while some rights were gained, […] entrenched gender codes were hardly overcome overnight" (Russell 169). One of the possible reasons why gender equality did not fully take hold in Japan is that it was viewed by some as the imposition of Western values on Japanese society. As Masao Miyoshi notes, the 1947 Constitution was not appreciated nor understood by many Japanese people who viewed it as a penalty for losing the war (196). Hence it is not surprising that Japanese officials were against constitutional equality. Specifically, "guaranteeing the equality of women in family life" was seen by Japanese authorities "to threaten the basis of male domination and female subordination in the family" (Pharr 231). Therefore, the democratic reformation of women's rights by the Occupation forces was neither complete nor welcomed. In that circumstance, it is questionable to what extent the "American-imposed" Constitution actually had a strong

[35] For the kiss debate, see Chapter 4 of McLelland (*Love*). Regarding kissing in Japanese cinema, Kawashima Yūzō's *Oitsu owaretsu* (*Chasing, Being Chased*, 1946) was released on January 24 before *Hatachi no seishun*, making the formation of *seppun eiga* more complicated. For details, see Kato ("Kissing").

[36] Julia C. Bullock et al., for instance, argues, "Occupation-era policies toward women were not uniformly progressive, and often had unintended consequences – for example, protective legislation that shut women out of certain types of employment and effectively rendered them second-class employees" (5).

impact on the everyday behavior of Japanese men.

Ambivalent reactions to post-war gender equality – admiration of American courtship and rejection of women's rising status – are evident in contemporary Japanese films. Previous research has mainly examined democratic values found in urban comedy (*tokai kigeki*), Japanese romantic comedy which had constituted itself as a genre during the Occupation era. Despite its similarities with Hollywood screwball comedy, according to Ku Mina, urban comedy is a historically specific genre that reflects both desire and resistance towards Americanized democratic values and lifestyles (81). Japan's contradictory reactions to modernity are especially embodied by female characters. Women in urban comedy are a new type of character who is financially independent and capable of voicing their opinions, denying and dismantling a traditional notion of femininity (Ku 123–128). Despite the embodiment of democratic values in female characters, however, it is ultimately the male characters who are tasked to unlock a brighter future (Ku 133). In that sense, urban comedy is equipped with two functions: it respects women's autonomy and highlights the attractiveness of courtship and dating practices, while the genre also aims to tame strong women and make them obedient wives.

Although the ideological project of conventional urban comedy could be argued as a reconstitution of male authority in romantic unions, the role of male characters in Japanese romantic films requires further investigation. One of the problems with emphasizing the ideological significance of female characters as bearers of democracy is that the strong presence of women can lead to male invisibility, allowing men to go underexamined. However, what is also notable (but largely ignored) in Japanese romantic comedy is effeminacy in men, the modern boy who brings democracy and gender equality to the extreme. Investigating the role of effeminate men in romantic comedy can provide

insight into how democratic values and gender equality were received in post-war Japan. To address these issues, this chapter draws on pre-war images of the modern boy for theoretical support as a means to effectively illustrate the impact of effeminacy in mediating modernity.

The Gender of Modernity

Modernity led to the formation of a new subjectivity for Japanese people. Approximately after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Japan experienced a massive influx of Western values and the formation of a civil and capitalistic society. This resulted in different modes of identification to Japanese people, such as *shufu* (housewives) and *sararīman* (white-collar men), which were distinctly gendered (Mackie, "Modern" 186–189). Additionally, cultural images circulated in magazines and films were consumed by the general public as reference material for them to construct modern selves. Especially popular and controversial in the 1920s were the images of the modern girl (*moga*) and her male counterpart, the modern boy.

Instead of the relatively insignificant *mobo*, previous research has predominantly focused on *moga*, which represented a new Japanese womanhood in modern times. Free-spirited with bobbed hair, the modern girl became a symbol of Westernized subjectivity, a Japanese version of the flapper, with aggressive sexuality and loose morals, signaling deviation from traditional womanhood in the domestic sphere.[37] Contested in academic discourses is whether such women actually existed in modern Japan. For some critics, the

[37] The emergence of the modern girl image was certainly not a Japanese-specific but worldwide phenomenon. For locally-specific accounts of the modern girl, see *The Modern Girl around the World* (2008).

modern girl was just an image for male writers to deal with a new type of womanhood through sexualization and commodification. Specifically, the image of the *moga* was culturally constructed through the exaggeration of the body, as exemplified by Tanizaki Junichirō's novel *Chijin no ai* (*Naomi*, 1925). The oversexualized body of the *moga* functioned more as a defense mechanism of masculinity through the patriarchal control of female sexuality than as a symbol for the liberation of women. As contended by Yoshimi Shunya, the depiction of the *moga*'s sexuality as a threat to male domains is a patriarchal viewpoint ("Teito" 31). This suggests that the modern girl was a convenient icon for (predominantly male) critics to examine and question changing notions of gender during a period of significant cultural transformation.

Although the *moga* might have been a mere by-product of consumerism and mass culture for conservative critics, it is essential to keep in mind its consequential influence on women's modern selves. According to Barbara Sato, "What made the modern girl such a powerful symbol was not that she represented a small percentage of 'real women,' but that she represented the possibilities for what all women could become" (49). In other words, the modern girl "provided a reference point for individual identity construction" (Mackie, "Sōshukoku" 94). Regardless of whether or not the modern girl was anything realistic, contemporary women certainly identified with the cultural image, idealized its materiality and modernness, and used its iconography to construct their own ideal selves.

The modern boy, in contrast to his female counterpart, has received considerably less social and scholarly attention. Characterized by their immaturity, urbanity, and a Western sense of fashion, the *mobo* is the *moga*'s playful partner. The cultural image of modern boy was constructed as a caricature that embodied modern experiences such as

"a slick Western-style fashionable appearance and enjoyment of related leisure pursuits, a desire for Hollywood-style romantic love, the thrill of criminality and the humorous combination of pseudo-intellectualism, superficiality and foolishness" (Barnett 76). The modern boy, however, more fluid in its definition, is not grounded in the actual existence of men in the early 20th century, and is thus more of a phantasm than the flamboyant modern girl. As noted by Sato, "The modern boy was clearly a media construct whose chief justification was to act as a balance for the modern girl" (64). Despite the fluidity and arbitrariness of its meaning, the definitive characteristic of the *mobo* is effeminacy. As the romantic partner of the powerful modern girl, the modern boy is imagined to be in a feminized and subordinated state. Such pairing serves as evidence for how the feminization of men was deemed to be a result of women's emancipation.

Satirical depictions of the *mobo*'s effeminacy are an example of conflicting anxieties related to modernity, nationalism, and masculinity. Pre-war Japan's encounter with dandyism can be studied as a case of how modernity impacted the traditional notion of masculinity then. Dandyism is originally a European style known for its artificiality and refinement. However, in the late 19th century UK, the image of dandy took on a stigmatizing view towards upper-class males as being feminine, idle, morally flexible, and engaged in heterosexual philandering (Sinfield, *The Wilde Century* 67–75). In modern Japan, the upper-class dandy figure was not only idealized as a symbol of Western thought and fashion, but was also rejected by some. According to Jason G. Karlin, Japanese officials who travelled to the West regarded the European dandy style as a symbol of refinement and civility, whereas those outside the government denounced an attempted application of the effeminate style in Japan as a superficial imitation of dandyism (41). Karlin continues that "the socially constructed identification of femininity

with the pejorative, regressive qualities of fashion, consumption, and materialism resulted in femininity being constrained and condemned as inimical to Japanese nationalism" (42). The importation of dandyism in Japan was imagined to cause the feminization of Japan, meaning that it sparked debates about national identity that were often framed in gendered terms.

In this context, the effeminate image of the *mobo* became a convenient symbol of the superficial application of modernity. According to Mark Anderson, for example, "scapegoating a male villain as a pretentious, badly Westernized, effeminate dandy is a key grammatical element of the *shimpa higeki* mode of resistance" (138). Unlike dandyism, which could be viewed as embodying Western sophistication that was favorably or critically received, the modern boy was often seen as a superficial emulation of Western style by Japanese men. Iwamoto Kenji draws attention to the distinctions between dandyism and the *mobo*, noting, "If the *mobo*'s brightness was accompanied by loudness, gaudiness, and pretense, dandyism was accompanied not just by brightness, but also astringency, quietness, and calmness" (178). Characterized by excessive exhibitionism, the modern boy can be understood as a satirical depiction of people who were thoughtlessly imitating the West and superficially performing dandyism in a ridiculous and unmanly manner. Simply put, "the modern boy is the dandy's inferior same-sex other self" (Peng 15). A judgmental attitude towards the incomplete process of Japan's modernization can be sensed from the way the modern boy was represented.

The modern boy's effeminacy also suggests a different indication about sexuality from the dandy. This is because the sexuality of the dandy has a more complex history than that of the *mobo*. Although the dandy was said to be effeminate due to his close relationship with women, the philandering image of dandyism underwent a major

transformation following the trials of Oscar Wilde in 1895. According to Alan Sinfield, "The image of the queer cohered at the moment when the leisured, effeminate, aesthetic dandy was discovered in same-sex practices, underwritten by money, with lower-class boys" (*The Wilde Century* 121). The public scandal surrounding the literary celebrity and his sexuality significantly impacted how the Wildean dandy was perceived, resulting in the widespread stereotype of the homosexual as feminine. In other words, the dandy's effeminacy became a connotative sign of homosexuality.

It is uncertain, however, to what degree the ambiguous sexuality of the dandy was imported to Japan and influenced the effeminate image of the modern boy. This is because juvenile delinquents were oftentimes perceived as *mobo*. In the late 19th century, two distinct types of young male images emerged: the *kōha* and the *nanpa*. According to David R. Ambaras,

> The term *kōha* denoted a type of student who concentrated on physical activities like jūdō, adopted a swaggering, aggressive style, and rejected contact with women out of fear of becoming weak and effeminate – a view they held of those students, referred to as "rakes" *(nanpa)*, who dressed well and pursued the company of women. (69)

The *kōha* and *nanpa* students were similar in that their aggressive sexuality was regarded as a form of juvenile delinquency, but they differed in their sexual object choices. The traditional *kōha* were feared among younger boys for their tendency to engage in forcible sexual acts, while the more Westernized *nanpa* were considered alarming for their ability

to seduce and corrupt girls from reputable families (Ambaras 69–84).[38] Here, the classic traditional/modern and homosexual/heterosexual dichotomies are relocated onto a smaller binary of male types, *kōha*/*nanpa*. Later in the 1920s, the behavior of philandering youths resembling the *nanpa* came to be associated with the concept of the modern boy. As it became common for women to work for money and take part in leisure activities with their male partners, the male youths came to be perceived as modern boys, "as […] delinquent libertine[s] in need of surveillance and discipline" (Ambaras 150). Modernity and effeminacy in men were imagined as signs of a loosening sexual morality, particularly among male youths like the *nanpa* and the modern boy, who were believed to be heterosexual philanderers.

The difference between the sexualities of the *mobo* and the Wildean dandy highlights that ideas of modernity are not unidirectional in that they only come from the West to Japan, but that they are adaptable to serve local needs. The meaning of effeminacy is not fixed, and can encompass different sexualities, attitudes, and judgements towards Japan's modernization. While effeminacy may symbolize various attributes, such as idleness, immorality, aristocracy, and homosexuality, the local reception was selective: Japanese government officials saw refinement and civility in the dandy image, whereas the *mobo*'s effeminacy was received with disdain as a sign of immaturity, superficiality, and immorality. Thus, the image of the modern boy received and transformed diverse thoughts and attitudes of modernity held by the local people. In Hsiao-yen Peng's understanding of the relation between the dandy and the modern boy, "While the dandy, acting as a cultural translator, transforms the influx and outflow of heterogeneous

[38] A historical account of this kind of student life with the *kōha* and the *nanpa* is especially evident in Mori Ōgai's *Vita Sexualis* (1909)

information through the transcultural site, his inferior other selves [the *moga* and *mobo*] are receptacles through which information is received and then flows out" (15). The modern boy functioned as a cultural medium which reacted to, articulated, and negotiated with modern experiences and the changing sexual mores.

The modern boy was a pre-war cultural imagination that did not survive the war. However, this chapter intentionally borrows the concept to examine how the image of the *mobo* as a mediator of modernity was repurposed and used in Japanese cinema to serve the needs of Japan after the defeat. Specifically, it looks at how effeminacy was employed to address the changing gender norms and sexual mores brought about by the implementation of gender equality by the Occupation forces. One of the key ways in which this image mediated modern values was through the performative and selective use of signs of effeminacy. These performances were used to highlight or parody certain aspects of modern values and courtship manners. To fully understand these cinematic representations, the chapter first provides the historical context of modern boy before textual analysis. The historical research indicates that the popular press played a significant role in shaping the perception of gender as a performative concept, which affected and was affected by the way the modern boy was portrayed in post-war Japan.

The Age of M + W

The depiction of the modern boy in cinema did not exist in a vacuum. In 1955, the idea that every individual is biologically constructed with both male (M) and female (W) characteristics, based on the philosophical and pseudoscientific work of Otto Weininger, went widespread. The idea was quickly adopted by tabloids and popularized

as the Age of M + W. This section offers a historical account of this previously overlooked social phenomenon to illustrate how the idea that it is possible to perform the gender of the opposite sex gained popularity in post-war Japan.

The theoretical basis of the Age of M + W was Weininger's *Sex and Character*, first published in 1903, the year when the author took his own life. In it, Weininger attempts to develop a theory of gender that disassociates sex from its biological determination. According to Weininger, "There are no living beings that can bluntly be described as being unisexual and of one definite sex. Rather, reality fluctuates between two points at neither of which an empirical individual can be encountered, but *between* which every individual has its place *somewhere*" (15).[39] For Weininger, gender is not a binary concept, but rather, it is closer to a spectrum that allows for a sexually intermediate condition where an individual is situated between ideal masculinity (M) and femininity (W).

Although Weininger's idea sounds progressive for its time, his argument is full of contradiction and discriminatory views. His argumentation is problematic in the second section where the issues of women's freedom and Judaism are highlighted. Unlike male rational geniuses, women are defined by their sexuality as "all female compassion manifests itself in *physical contact with the object of her compassion*" (Weininger 172).[40] The definition of female sexuality is eventually tied to Weininger's critique of modernity which, he believes, is deemed to be Jewish and, thus, effeminate (299). The solution proposed by Weininger to address the perceived corruption of modern civilization, caused by virilized women and feminized (Jewish) men, is to overcome this feminized state. In

[39] Highlighted in the original.
[40] Highlighted in the original.

his own words, "[*I*]*f all femininity is immoral, Woman must cease to be Woman and become Man*" (Weininger 308).[41] Weininger's claim is problematic not only for its misogyny and antisemitism, but also for the inconsistencies in the argument. As Chandak Sengoopta rightly notes,

> After arguing in the first part that no individual was ever exclusively masculine or feminine, and that morphology and psychology were interrelated sciences, Weininger seemed to contradict himself with this unqualified assumption of psychological monosexuality, which would be fundamental to the second part of *Geschlecht und Charakter* [*Sex and Character*]. (50)

Weininger's scientific attempt to theorize gender is imperfect in that, despite his proposition that gender is fluid, the concept is still dominated by male superiority based on gender stereotypes.[42]

The idea of the gender spectrum, based on traditional gender norms, was appropriated and repurposed in 1955 during the age of M + W. It originally started out as a promotional campaign for the film, *Seishun kaidan* (*Ghost Story of Youth*, 1955). Based on Shishi Bunroku's novella of the same title, the two film versions were produced simultaneously by two companies, Nikkatsu and Shin-Tōhō, and released on the same day, April 19, 1955. To win the competition against Nikkatsu, Shin-Tōhō made it fashionable to perform the opposite gender to sell the film. In an April 5 advertisement (*Seishun 5*), for instance, the short haircut of the lead actress Anzai Kyōko, who was

[41] Highlighted in the original.
[42] For in-depth academic critiques on Weininger's book, see Hyams and Harrowitz, as well as Steuer. For an examination of the reception of *Sex and Character* in Japan, see Nishino.

playing the role of Okumura Chiharu, was promoted as the fashionable "Chiharu style." The advertisement also included an announcement of a Chiharu style contest on April 10 in Ginza, where people could compete to imitate Chiharu's boyish hairstyle. Shin-Tōhō's attempt to promote this hairstyle as a new form of fashion highlights and encourages women's performance of the male gender.[43]

It was in this context that Weininger's *Sex and Character* was appropriated for the promotion of the film. An advertisement for Shin-Tōhō's film adaptation on April 17 scandalously posed the question of whether sex can be reassigned, quoting Weininger's idea that individual character is a combination of M and W traits (*Seishun 17*). The advertisement further used Chiharu's flat breasts and small butt as examples of male components in female characters. In this way, the Age of M + W emerged as a marketing campaign that made a scandal out of the coexistence of male and female traits in one body in *Seishun kaidan*.

The appropriation of Weininger's book did not stop with the promotion of the film: weekly magazines (*shūkanshi*) continued to sensationalize the idea to generate excitement. *Shūkan Asahi*'s May 8, 1955 issue is especially significant in that it proclaimed the Age of M + W.[44] The eight-page special focus on M + W first gave a theoretical and scientific explanation of human character, relying on Weininger's ideas and using Chiharu as a case study ("'W + M'" 5–6). It follows with an evaluation of the M + W spectrum of notable figures, such as politicians, novelists, and actors. For example, Hatoyama Ichirō, then the Prime Minister of Japan, was said to be W70 and M30 for his

[43] The popularity of short haircuts was also influenced by the Japanese release of William Wyler's *Roman Holiday* (1953) in 1954. Contemporary authors viewed the Hepburn hairstyle as an early example of the increase of M traits in women (Ōya 162; Yoshida 203).

[44] The terminology used for the Age of M + W was inconsistent and varied between *W + M jidai* (the Age of W + M) and *MW jidai* (the Age of MW). For the purpose of this thesis, the Age of M + W will be consistently used as it was most commonly employed during that time period.

particular interest in an aesthetic that was popular among young girls; Mifune Toshirō was undeniably M100 for his very "Japanese" masculinity ("'W + M'" 8–9). Such magazine articles popularized the idea of gender as a spectrum, using people's likings and looks as criteria to measure their masculinity and femininity. It is also worth noting that the widespread popularity of the Age of M + W drew conservative responses. An article in the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, for instance, blamed co-educational schools for causing the masculinization of women and the feminization of men ("MW"). The Age of M + W was perceived as both amusing and threatening, offering the possibility for both sexes to perform the opposite gender.

Although the Age of M + W was a unique phenomenon, it has limitations in terms on gender fluidity. Despite Weininger's effort to theorize sex and character, the evaluation of M and W characters was based not on biology, but on how well people's looks and interests aligned with traditional gender codes, reinforcing the conventional value of masculinity and femininity. In other words, the performed gender of M and W characters was seen as a reflection of their inner gender balance. The emphasis on gender performance to describe human character influenced and was influenced by the representation of the modern boy in Japanese films, including those both before and after *Seishun kaidan*.

The Modern Boy in Post-war Japanese Cinema

The following sections analyze depictions of the modern boy in post-war Japanese cinema as mediators of modernity, democracy, and gender equality. The characters analyzed were selected based on traits that are similar to the dandy and pre-

war *mobo*, such as effeminacy, Westernized fashion, idleness, immorality, and philandering. Above all, what defines the modern boy is their relationship with women, either as idiotic boyfriends or treacherous seducers. Despite this research's focus on romantic unions, it does not intend to conduct a genre study of romantic comedy, nor can all the texts selected for analysis be classified into categories of screwball comedy or urban comedy. Instead, this chapter regards genre as being unfixed and diachronic, with conventions and patterns that are continually revised. According to Celestino Deleyto's approach to genre, "Genres are not groups of films but, rather, abstract systems formed by elements taken from many films. The generic bag contains conventions, structures, and narrative patterns, but no films" (227–228). Thus, it is not necessary for films to swear any allegiance to one specific genre as multiple borrowings of generic conventions are possible. Deleyto argues, "Film texts are meeting points in which various genres come into contact with one another, vie for dominance, and are transformed" (228). Thus, determining which specific genre the analyzed films belong to is not the primary focus of this research. That being said, the characterization of the modern boy owes its existence to Hollywood romantic comedy and urban comedy, and references to their conventions and ideological implications will be made when beneficial.

The chapter focuses on how modern experiences were mediated through the depiction of effeminate performances of *mobo* in Japanese romantic films. Screen acting is a useful lens for this analysis as the bodies of characters can be used as an index of political meanings. As James Naremore notes, film acting involves "[a] series of expressive techniques governing such matters as posture, gesture, and voice, and regulating the entire body as an index of gender, age, ethnicity, and social class" (4). As "the very technique of film acting has ideological importance," examining the modern

boy's effeminate performance and the actor's delivery of it can uncover specific aspects of modern masculinity in post-war Japan that the texts highlight (Naremore 1). For the convenience of analysis, the modern boy is divided into three categories: immature boys, understanding partners, and malicious philanderers. These categories are not always mutually exclusive (e.g. immature boys can be flirtatious), but each category provides different perspectives into the reactions and critiques these characters bring. All in all, the modern boy serves as a performative mediator of modernity, providing a critical lens through which the changing gender norms in post-war Japan can be examined.

Immature Boys

The effeminacy of immature boys is a signifier of their greenness and flirtatious nature. Driven by their insecurity and immaturity, these characters are often portrayed as dependent and idle young men in need of maternal attention. Their dependence and idleness often stem from their relatively high social status and the ability of their families to afford flashy Western clothes. These characters often take supporting roles that represent the post-war *après-guerre*, the young generation that is not bound by the codes and ethics of the older generation who has experienced war. It is true that the pairing of weaker men with stronger women was common in romantic comedies, as screwball comedies in particular are often described as embodying a "gender role reversal," signaling a "breakdown in the binary hierarchy of masculine/feminine" (Glitre 56). The immature boys, however, with their exaggerated performances, take the destruction of the patriarchal structure to the extreme, seemingly giving up male authority for sexual desire, protection, and the idolization of women. The implication is that modernity and the rise

of women's status led to the feminization of young men, making them the weaker group.

One of the first immature boys is Takafumi in *Jiyū gakkō*, played by Sada in the Shōchiku version and Ōizumi Akira in the Daiei version. Although the two adaptations are unique in their own right,[45] the characterization of Takafumi remains more or less faithful to Shishi's original novel: he is a caricature of the unintelligible *après-guerre*. As a supporting character who becomes infatuated with the female protagonist Komako during her marital crisis, Takafumi's philandering is expressed through Sada/Ōizumi's exaggerated performance that highlights his submissive behavior. This is particularly evident in the beach sequence of the Shōchiku version in which he is first introduced. While Komako is having lunch on a sandy beach, the young couple Takafumi and Yuri enter the frame quarreling. The following shots of Yuri walking ahead and Takafumi trying to keep up are rapidly cut, with close-ups on their feet. The emphasis on the quick physical movements associates the woman with a free-spirited figure who takes the lead, while the man, crying out in a tearful voice, is portrayed as an obedient follower. In a meticulous analysis of the scene, Kubo correctly points out that Yuri represents the post-war new woman ("'Shibu-Jii'" 285). At the same time, Takafumi represents a post-war new man as his submissive personality makes him a sissified version of the dandy. Moreover, the scene is meant to reflect the point of view of Komako, creating distance between the audience and the caricatured young couple. However progressive their gender performances might seem, Yuri and Takafumi are ultimately described by Komako as *okashina hito-tachi* (strange people).

Takafumi's subordination to women is not motivated by respect, but by his desire to pursue romantic interests. Sada's physically expressive acting effectively conveys

[45] For a detailed comparison of the two versions, see Tsunoo.

Takafumi's submission to women he favors, Yuri and Komako, as depicted in several instances. When Takafumi shakes sand off Yuri's shoes or picks up items that Komako has furiously thrown away, his voluntary submissions to a lower position are portrayed to be foolish and clumsy, as exaggerated by Sada. Furthermore, when Takafumi visits Komako's house, the film visually contrasts the power dynamics between the two, with Komako inside at a higher position and Takafumi outside at a lower position. The inside/outside and higher/lower dichotomies gratify Takafumi, as he derives pleasure from emasculation. From his inferior position outside, Takafumi endeavors to grasp Komako's hands and invade the interior space. Takafumi's fascination with women and willingness to submit himself to them are rooted in his sexual desire to be dominated by older, assertive women. Effeminacy in *Jiyū gakkō* is depicted in films as an expression of immature behavior of modern teenagers, who are driven by their strong sexual desire to submit themselves to stronger women.

The immature character type continued after *Jiyū gakkō* and, in particular, established Ōizumi's persona. Ōizumi is a quarter-Russian comedian who first gained recognition as a child performer in the pre-war era and later as a stage actor at Bungei-za in the immediate post-war period. His unique face, which reflects his Russian ancestry, was used to communicate American-inspired values, such as free love and an obsession with material objects, like clothing and accessories. After the popularity of his effeminate performance in *Jiyū gakkō*, Ōizumi reprised the role of immature boys in films like Saitō Torajirō's *Bikkuri sanjūshi* (*The Surprised Musketeers*, 1952) and Saeki Kōzō's *Hanayome hanamuko chambara bushi* (*A Chambara Ballad of Bride and Groom*, 1952). In *Bikkuri sanjūshi*, for example, Ōizumi plays Kyōkichi, a mama's boy madly in love with the heroine Keiko. His immaturity is evident in the way he courts women. In one

particular instance, he asks his powerful mother to matchmake him with Keiko after several failed attempts to get her attention. Ōizumi's over-the-top performance accentuates Kyōkichi's absurd imitation of dandyism, which is marked by his fashionable Western attire (suits, hats, and ties) and ridiculous physical movements, such as falling over and being blown away by a fan. In a scene in which Kyōkichi asks Keiko for her drink preference, he pronounces the English word "juice" in an overly foreign manner, implying that he has unfounded confidence in his linguistic competence. All in all, Kyōkichi represents the early persona of Ōizumi as a spoiled philanderer who ridiculously imitates westerners.[46]

An early example of immature boys can be seen in *Jiyū gakkō* and the image became attached to Ōizumi's persona. Similar character types continued to appear on Japanese screens and immature boys became typical characters in Japanese romantic films until the early 1960s.[47] Having said that, these caricatured figures do not seem to be based on actual men's lives, nor do they offer an ideal portrayal of modern young men. Instead, they served as satirical representations of wannabe modernists through exaggerated performances to emphasize their superficiality. By doing so, the films created a critical distance between effeminate behavior and viewers, allowing them to treat it as nothing more than the immaturity of flirtatious teenagers.

---

[46] Later in his career, Ōizumi's heterosexual philandering image took on a more subversive quality as he portrayed a sisterboy in Yoshimura Ren's *Tokyo yarō to onna domo* (*Tokyo Guys and Dolls*, 1958) and a character with homosexual tendencies in Ishii Teruo's *Kangoku ninbetsu-chō* (*Prisoners' Black List*, 1970).

[47] Other examples are as follows: In Kimura Keigo's *Kanpai! Tokyo musume* (*Cheers! Tokyo Girls*, 1952), Ushio Mantarō plays a womanizing son of a company president who hysterically pursues the female protagonist. Ushio plays an effeminate character, a devoted fan of an all-female theater troupe, in Hisamatsu Seiji's *Asakusa kurenai-dan* (*The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa*, 1952). In Edagawa Hiromu's *Asa no kuchibue* (*A Whistle in the Morning*, 1957), a matchmaking partner is depicted as a Westernized effeminate man. In Inoue Umetsugu's *Heiten jikan* (*Closing Time*, 1962), the elevator girl Sayuri (Enami Kyōko) goes out with multiple boyfriends, one of whom is Noro Kei'ichi (Matsumoto Kanji), who is treated as a child and jilted in the end.

Understanding Partners

Not all modern boys are immature and submissive. Some Japanese men in films are as considerate and civilized as the Western dandy, and could potentially make ideal life partners. These progressive men understand the importance of respecting women's careers and autonomy and are willing to share housework chores, as they view men and women as equals. In other words, these understanding partners are devoted practitioners of democracy and gender equality. If romantic comedy can be considered "the comedy of equality," both liberated women and considerate men are required to form an equal partnership that is not limited by traditional gender roles (Cavell 82).

Understanding partners, however, are not a brand-new type in post-war Japanese cinema. It has been pointed out in film studies scholarship that feminized men of compassion and commitment have appeared in melodrama aimed at female consumers before. As contended by Tania Modleski, "[T]he man with 'feminine' attributes frequently functions as a figure upon whom feminine desires for freedom from patriarchal authority may be projected" (333). In the case of Japanese cinema, Uehara Ken was extremely popular among female audiences in the pre-war period for playing the role of modernized gentlemen in melodrama who was always supportive of women. Closely analyzing Uehara's character in Gosho Heinosuke's *Shindō* (*New Way*, 1936), Kōno Marie applies Modleski's concept to the Japanese text and argues that Uehara's masochistic devotion to the heroine is exploited by films for women's visual pleasure and desire for release from the patriarchal system (76–80). Thus, Uehara's persona in melodramatic films "constructed a new national identity against the existing masculine image" (Kōno 80).

However, the understanding partners discussed here are not the same as feminized men in melodrama. These effeminate characters should have a cinematic genealogy that traces back to global feminized icons, such as Rudolph Valentino and Uehara, but effeminacy of understanding partners is often portrayed in a questionable light. The post-war modern boy figure serves as a site of negotiation, where filmic reactions towards westernized men who are considerate of women are expressed. In most films, they are objects of ridicule as modern boys take femininity and democratic ideas to the extreme, to the extent that their refined or civil demeanor cannot be taken seriously. That being said, there are a few films, like *Seishun kaidan*, that challenge the heteronormative society through the depiction of unconventional couples. In any case, the effeminacy of understanding partners is a direct indicator of their respect for women, through which the films' attitudes towards gender equality can be perceived.

An early example of understanding partners in Ichikawa Kon's *Aoiro kakumei* (*The Blue Revolution*, 1953) is a representative case in which their effeminacy and gender-equal views are treated with disdain. In it, Mikuni Rentarō plays Fukuzawa, a modernized lodger who has his sights set on Miyoko (Kuji Asami), the niece of the house-owner. Although the original novel by Ishikawa Tatsuzō depicts him as an epitome of beauty, the film version is equipped with cynicism as his effeminate beauty is caricatured and over-emphasized. The film's satirical treatment of Fukuzawa is conveyed by Mikuni's over-the-top gestures and sissified manners, such as his wearing of flamboyant clothes, use of women's language, interest in ballet, and over-polite courtship behavior. Mikuni's body-centered performance drew negative reactions from critics, who described it as "over-acting" ("Abura") and "uncomfortable" ("Iyarashii").[48] Mikuni's exaggerated

[48] Mikuni plays another gender ambiguous character in Taniguchi Senkichi's *Fukeyo haru kaze* (*My*

performance is apparent from the very first close-up shot of Fukuzawa, when Tsuneko (Sawamura Sadako), the house-owner's wife, visits his room. Fukuzawa, playing the guitar, slightly looks up and, while blinking repeatedly with raised eyebrows, greets Tsuneko with a flamboyant smile. Fukuzawa's showy posturing and Mikuni's excessive attention to facial movements make the character a parody of beauty.

By portraying Fukuzawa's effeminate behavior in a mocking manner, the film also calls into question his views on life after marriage. At the end of the film when he and Miyoko agree to get married, Fukuzawa expresses his support for her career and suggests that they will divide household tasks equally (though the bride is not willing to cook). A reaction shot of an astonished Tsuneko is then inserted, showing her saying, "Are you really okay with this?" while slightly shaking her head. Despite Tsuneko's surprise, Fukuzawa is confident in his future happiness and exuberantly expresses his emotions by spreading his arms wide open and then performing a handstand. This scene highlights the intersection of Mikuni's over-the-top performance and the film's skeptical attitude towards gender equality. The handstand is not only another eccentric physical performance of Fukuzawa/Mikuni, but also has a deeper implication that traditional gender norms have been turned over. The odd pairing of Fukuzawa and Miyoko is viewed from the older generation throughout the film as a representative of unintelligible modern couples. The comedic treatment of Fukuzawa serves as a satirical critique of those who willingly give up male superiority in order to support women.[49]

Wonderful Yellow Car, 1953). An interesting fact is that Mikuni disregarded the gender-normative script and made subversive changes on his own (Sano 42).

[49] Similar characters can be found in the following films: In Ichikawa's *Josei ni kansuru jūni-shō* (*Twelve Chapters about Women*, 1954), Watanabe (Tachikawa Hiroshi) is willing to become an obedient husband to support the career of the female protagonist as a ballerina, but is eventually rejected. In Koishi Ei'ichi's *Taifū musuko: Saikō shukun no maki* (*Monsoon Son Pt. 2*, 1958), the young protagonist breaks up a relationship between his sister and Jun (Sugi Gi'ichi), a fashionably refined but ridiculously feminine modern man. In Tanaka Shigeo's *Tokyo no hitomi* (*Tokyo's Eyes*,

On the other hand, Shin'ichi (Mihashi Tatsuya) in Nikkatsu's *Seishun kaidan* presents the possibility of gender-fluid couples. Despite being satirically depicted in his pragmatic relationship with Chiharu (Kitahara Mie), he is not as much of an object of ridicule as Fukuzawa. Shin'ichi is an amateur financier with an anal personality, whose effeminate dandyish style indicates his refinement, rationality, and dislike for inefficiency.[50] Chiharu, on the other hand, is his androgenous childhood friend who aspires to be a professional ballerina. The couple is an embodiment of the gender disorder in post-war Japan where, as Shishi himself puts it, the distinction between men and women was blurred (354). However, rather than implicit criticism, the Nikkatsu film version offers the possibility of a romantic union, that is not bound by sexual difference.

The couple questions traditional views of marriage, which are based on sexual differences and procreation. Midway through the film, Shin'ichi and Chiharu agree to marry out of convenience, hoping that their union will encourage their widowed parents, Chiharu's father and Shin'ichi's mother, to also tie the knot. Although their marriage proposal is unromantic and practical, it is not without affection: their fondness for each other stems from their lack of gendered presentations. Chiharu appreciates Shin'ichi's lack of masculine qualities, as it does not make her aware of her biological sex as a woman. For Shin'ichi, sexual intercourse is seen as meaningless because of the overabundance of people who are controlled by their sexual desire. Thus, Chiharu's non-feminine presentation and focus on her career over romance make her a rational choice as a life

---

1958), Kawasaki Keizō plays Haruki Jūkichi, an effeminate designer who is romantically partnered with a tomboy. In Edagawa's *Kirai kirai kirai* (*I Hate You, I Hate You, I Hate You*, 1960), Hirose (Matsumoto Kanji), an effeminate salaryman who is fond of milk, is one of the six company representatives vying for the position of the *zaibatsu*'s heir by marrying the daughter of the president. Despite being a marital candidate, his role is merely comic relief. It is also important to note that one critic deemed Hirose subversive and described the character as a "gay boy" (Kosuge).

[50] In Shin-Tōhō's film adaptation, on the other hand, Shin'ichi (Utsui Ken) is more gender normative and does not use women's language.

partner. Their reasoning for choosing a spouse is pragmatic, as it provides the best solution for achieving what they want. It simultaneously challenges marital and romantic ideologies since their affection comes from their ungendered presentations. Nikkatsu's *Seishun kaidan* demonstrates faith in the power of gender performance to overwrite biological determinism.

Traditional marriage is not just challenged conceptually by the couple's view of marriage, but also by acting and formal techniques. Their scheme to get married to marry their parents off is formulated in a business-like manner with little emotional attachment involved. Especially notable is Mihashi and Kitahara's fast-talking and flat acting. Unlike the exaggerated gestures of Sada and Mikuni, their performances are characterized by simplicity and stillness. The scene's editing strategy is a combination of two shots and shot-reverse shots, making their decision-making appear rational and discussion-based. Ironically, the scene takes place in a romantic atmosphere with flickering lights and fairytale-like music. Against the backdrop, the couple's rational debate about their marriage was strategic and unemotional, defying the conventions of romantic films. Such ironic presentation calls attention to their pragmatic way of thinking, which challenges the traditional marital constitution.[51]

The film's ending shows that the engagement between Shin'ichi and Chiharu does not result in the reinstatement of the heteronormative order, but instead presents the possibility of equal partnership. Although Chiharu's anatomical sex is called into question at one point of the film due to a deceptive letter which claims that Chiharu is not a woman, her anatomical sex is later reaffirmed. Despite this, the film carefully avoids a convention

[51] In the early 1950s, Ichikawa and his screenwriter partner Wada Natto were developing a directorial method to use comedy for social criticism. The cynical disjuncture between style and performance must have been informed by their method. For a deeper understanding of their approach, see Ichikawa and Wada.

of Hollywood romantic comedy that places a "moment of integration" between the couple at the ending (Neale and Krutnik 156). The marriage ceremony is organized for their parents and the wedding for the young couple is postponed. In the final scene, Shin'ichi and Chiharu walk in opposite directions, bluntly saying goodbye to each other, as both of them are busy with their own businesses. The dialogue about their future marriage, delivered in a monotonous manner, is contrasted with the visual image of separation captured in a long shot. The flat acting, simple dialogue, and long shot effectively convey the couple's rational and logical partnership that prioritizes their careers. The film presents a satirical but positive portrayal of equality and democracy, suggesting that romance can be harmoniously integrated with partnership.[52]

The understanding partners in these films embody the different reactions of films to democratic values and gender equality. On the one hand, the refined, dandyish image is portrayed ironically in *Aoiro kakumei*, creating a critical distance between the representation of the understanding partner and the audience. On the other hand, effeminacy in *Seishun kaidan* is depicted as a new quality in young men who embrace gender equality.

Malicious Philanderers

Characters who support women's autonomy sometimes misunderstand or abuse democratic values for their own benefit. In particular, dandyish philanderers use the guise

[52] Another example of favorable treatments of understanding partners is Fukuda (Nanbara Shinji), a fashionable magazine writer, in Nomura Yoshitarō's *Hanayome no onoroke* (*The Bride's Fond Talk of Love*, 1958). He is a supporting character who is in love with Abe Hideko (Okada Mariko), the boyish heroine, and is hoping for mutual affection. Nanbara's slightly exaggerated performance of effeminacy could be interpreted ironically, but the ending implies their future marital union.

of free love and women's liberation to exploit women's bodies. The rationalization in modern society is reduced to a mere excuse for taking advantage of women. These malicious philanderers are similar to the refined dandy who just cannot resist their sexual impulses. Effeminacy is not just a sign of sophistication and moral flexibility, but also of their malicious intention. Embodying the corruption of sexual mores, the Western dandy in Japanese cinema is threatening as they can easily violate women.

Malicious philanderers only appear as supporting characters, as effeminate villains whose gender performance indicates their maliciousness. In Kawashima Yūzō's *Ginza 24-chō* (*Tales of Ginza*, 1955), Momoyama Gō (Abe Tōru) is a scheming Francophile painter. This deceitful womanizer approaches Wakako (Tsukioka Yumeji), claiming to be the painter of one of the portrait paintings that she owns, with the intention of enticing her into a sexual relationship. Momoyama's pseudo-dandy image and effeminate speech manner serve as indicators of his untruthfulness and philandering tendencies, which women should be wary of. Another untrustworthy philanderer is Toyoda (Tachikawa Hiroshi) in Sugawa Eizō's *Boku-tachi no shippai* (*Our Failures*, 1962). Being the protagonist's co-worker at a factory, he is a man of practicality, who knows how to go with the flow while engaging with as many women as possible. Toyoda's pragmatic and selfish approach to life is conveyed through Tachikawa's flat-sounding, emotionally void performance.[53]

[53] Another example is Shimoda (Shōji Eiken) in Nakahira Kō's *Ashita hareru ka* (*Wait for Tomorrow*, 1960). Fashionable and refined, Shimoda works as a teacher at a charm school, dating Shinobu (Watanabe Misako), the sister of the heroine. When his betrayal and romantic association with a student were exposed, Shimoda tries to defend himself by advocating for the idea of contracted romance, a supposedly rational and modern system that allows for the dissolution of a relationship whenever one party wishes to do so. As punishment for his insincerity, the effeminate womanizer gets beaten up by a masculine hero, played by Ishihara Yūjirō. The idea of rationalism is employed as an excuse for being irresponsible and true to sexual desire and, for that, malicious philanderers must be held accountable.

Co-written by Ōshima Nagisa, Nomura's *Donto ikōze* (*Boldly Forward*, 1959) is a striking example in which the performative nature of the dandy's effeminacy is exposed. In it, Sakurai Rika (Maki Noriko), the leader of the university's radio club, interviews notable student writer Ikue Shinzaburō (Oyamada Munenori), who is rumored to be a womanizer. Fashionably dressed and speaking in women's language, Shinzaburō invites Rika to a rural inn and make sexual advances to her. At the critical moment, Rika is rescued by Momoki Saburō (Tsugawa Masahiko), her love interest who happens to be Shinzaburō's childhood friend. Shinzaburō demonstrates how malicious philanderers employ sophisticated women's language when making sexual advances and a more masculine tone when speaking to male friends. It is telling that the modern boy can easily adopt masculine and feminine forms of speech and behavior depending on their intentions. *Donto ikōze* exposes that effeminacy is merely a performative mask that womanizers put on, behind which a malicious sexual predator is hiding.[54]

Effeminacy in malicious philanderers serves two purposes. On the surface, the Japanese dandy is seen as having acquired a high level of stylistic refinement and modern civility, as well as a progressive view on women's status. Once their true nature is exposed, however, it becomes clear that they are nothing but opportunistic womanizers whose sole interest is to take advantage of women.[55] The performed effeminacy simultaneously

[54] Tanaka Shigeo's *Shinkon nikki: Hazukashii yume* (*A Diary of Newlyweds: An Embarrassing Dream*, 1956) offers a different connection between effeminacy and performance. In it, Kurosawa (Fujima Daisuke) is an effeminate neighbor who constantly borrows the protagonists' house phone. Although he initially seemed to be a philanderer saying romantic things, it was revealed that he was recounting romantic stories to his sister in the hospital. The film discloses that the performance of romantic behavior can contain different meanings in different contexts.

[55] The following cases show similar but a slightly different characterization of malicious philanderers: In Nakajima Yoshitsugu's *Kitakami yakyoku* (*Kitakami River Nocturne*, 1961), Yabukōji (Kondō Hiroshi) is a friend of the protagonist and the rapist of the heroine. His maliciousness and reckless behavior are caused by his unrequited devotion to his love interest, older Akiko (Minamikaze Yūko). In Horiuchi Manao's *Barikan oyabun* (*The Hair Clippers Boss*, 1963), Seizaburō (Happa Mutoshi) is a fashionable customer who is passionately in love with the female barber Ginko (Saga Michiko) to the extent that he engages in sexual misconduct by trespassing on

signals a sense of civil manners and raises questions about that civility itself, rendering the dandy morally suspect. In the end, malicious philanderers are depicted as villains, who are punished or ethically condemned, serving as the negative counterpart to the morally upright main couples. The characterization is a response to gender equality and the Japanese imitation of dandyish manliness, offering a satirical warning that women's autonomy and free love will not lead to positive outcomes.

The three variations of the modern boy in romantic Japanese films reveal diverse reactions to gender equality as mediated through effeminate characters. Caricatured images of immature boys represent weakened men who have voluntarily abandoned masculinity and devoted themselves to older women, reflecting fears of the feminization of men due to rising women's status. Understanding partners, on the other hand, are ironically depicted with critical distance because of their respect for women's autonomy. Malicious philanderers embody anxieties about how free love can be abused for male sexual desire. As women's agency gained recognition, courtship practices and democratic values were questioned and imagined through the making of romantic Japanese films, in which effeminate characters played an ideological role.

These satirical representations of the modern boy are conveyed through over- (or under-) acting for a comedic effect. This kind of comedic acting can be regarded as a form of radical deconstruction, a kind of performance that "lets an incoherence in the 'acted image' become almost as visible as the divisions within the character" (Naremore 77–78). The comedic portrayal of the modern boy can expose the illusion that acting is realistic

her private property. In both cases, their immoral behavior is caused not only by sexual desire, but also by infatuation towards one particular woman. As a result, they represent a different type of malicious philanderers, as their misdeeds are motivated by futile romantic interests.

and uncover the constructedness of performance, gender, and modernity. In doing so, it calls attention to certain aspects of modernity and reveals the underlying critical judgments and attitudes towards modernization. In other words, the modern boy served as a performer of modernity, as Japanese films appropriated the transnational icon to address local concerns in a response to modern experiences.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the representation of the modern boy and how it conveyed different reactions to gender equality through effeminacy. The pre-war cultural imaginations of the *moga* and the *mobo* were a response to changing femininity and masculinity in modern times, providing a contested ground for the articulation and critique of modern experiences. The modern boy can be seen as a less sophisticated version of the dandy, a Japanese interpretation of Western manners and ideals, that was more often ridiculed than celebrated. This image of the modern boy was revisited in post-war Japanese cinema to negotiate democratic reforms and gender equality. During the time of M + W when the idea that gender is performativity was popularized by tabloids, romantic films served as attempts to explore the implementation of gender equality. The modern boy played a mediating role in the process, embodying the Japanese dandy and conveying diverse meanings and reactions that enabled the negotiation of gender equality and the reexamination of masculinity.

Rather than limiting the meaning of effeminacy to a single sexuality or identity, this chapter embraced diverse ideological attachments to the modern boy and analyzed them in different texts. Although the modern boy can oscillate between superficial

normativity and implicit queer possibility (e.g. Ōizumi's performance later in his career), their effeminate presentation should be embraced as an exploration of an alternative mode of male expression. This depiction of the modern boy gained momentum in the 1950s and waned in the early 1960s, when effeminate representations took a different turn due to the media craze of the sisterboy, which will be the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 3

The Sisterboy:
The Commodification of Effeminacy

A brief reference to the sisterboy in Masumura Yasuzō's *Kyojin to gangu* (*Giants and Toys*, 1958) is part of a satirical critique of Japan's consumer culture. In it, Shima Kyōko (Nozoe Hitomi), a naïve young girl from a working-class family, is discovered by candy manufacturer World and asked to become a new mascot model for their latest product. As the new promotional campaign for the product achieves the target on an unprecedented level, Kyōko finds herself at the center of media brouhaha and her family background and personality are made up by mass media. Kyōko's subjectivity is reduced to a reproducible image and her body is merely an empty replaceable vessel, exploited by World to boost caramel sales. Advertising director Gōda Ryūji (Takamatsu Hideo) cynically asserts that such is a characteristic of contemporary Japan: people's identities are being overtaken by commodities. Due to the overflow of media outlets, editors and producers are pressured to print articles and broadcast programs every day, every minute, and for that reason, they are eager to make stars out of anyone, be it writers or murderers. And one of the examples Gōda raises of media-generated images is none other than the sisterboy.

This chapter investigates a historically specific media phenomenon, the sisterboy craze of 1957. Effeminate figures and images themselves are nothing new in the history of Japan, but the sisterboy sensation is unique in a way that effeminacy became an object of media's fervent attention. Having said that, there seems to be little understanding today

on what the sisterboy was or what the media phenomenon meant. In today's Japanese dictionary explanation, the sisterboy is "a slang which refers to male youths whose looks, attitudes, and personalities give a weak and feminine impression" ("Sisutā Bōi"). A small number of academic discussions mostly agree with the dictionary definition while adding historical and cultural contexts. According to Mitsuhashi Junko, the sisterboy originally came from the American film *Tea and Sympathy* (1956) and refers to beautiful boys serving older women ("Gay" 317). Mitsuhashi further situates the sisterboy in the genealogy of Japanese culture, which idolizes the beauty of young boys, be it *chigo* or *shudō* ("Gay" 319). The above literature is certainly historically accurate but does not grasp the whole picture of the sisterboy craze: Mitsuhashi's approach does not underline the ideological implications of making a media craze out of effeminacy. In this respect, it is crucial to question what exactly was being consumed when effeminacy was popularized as the "sisterboy" in Japan's consumer society.

This chapter regards the sisterboy as a media phenomenon and construction in an image-oriented society. As the term was performatively constructed by signifying practices of the media industry, it constantly alters its meaning. Employed in an ambiguous and flexible manner, the sisterboy defies an easy definition and cannot simply be reduced to sissiness or male beauty. Thus, there seems to be little point in trying to define what the term means or fixate the sexuality of the sisterboy. Rather, the chapter investigates how such effeminate images appeared and were consumed in weekly magazines and films, at a time when consumer society was formulated in Japan. First, the chapter outlines a historical review of and theoretical approaches to Japan's consumer culture in the 1950s. It follows with an examination of the sisterboy craze in two different and yet interconnected ways. The first section is a historical overview of media attention

to the sisterboy in 1957, relying on primary sources (i.e. magazine articles and movie pamphlets), to contend how the phenomenon was incurred by cinematic and media interests in scandalizing immoral sexual behavior. In the second section, filmic texts are analyzed to investigate how the sisterboy is represented on screen. Putting especial attention on Koishi Ei'ichi's *Taifū musuko: Shūgakuryokō no maki* (*Monsoon Son Pt. 1*, 1958) and Okamoto Kihachi's *Kekkon no subete* (*All About Marriage*, 1958), the chapter argues that the sisterboy became a visual spectacle that transforms images into bodily sensations. The 1957 sisterboy craze was one brief instance in consumer society in which extraordinary bodies were turned into something safe and consumable.

The Commodification of Sexuality

It is almost a cliché to quote the ubiquitous 1956 white paper as the endpoint of the post-war period.[56] Although when and how the post-war period ended is highly disputable (if it even ended at all), the famous phrase, "*mohaya sengo de wa nai* (It is no longer the post-war)," has been remembered as the favorable endpoint of Japan's defeat in World War II.[57] One of the significant societal transformations that mark the beginning of the new era is the formation of mass culture. Promoting the acceleration of production and consumption, the development of industrial capitalism resulted in the rapid formation of media infrastructure. The publishing market was dominated by weekly magazines and the television, introduced in 1953, made a strong impact on the nature of mass

[56] The original report is available on the Cabinet Office's website: https://www5.cao.go.jp/keizai3/keizaiwp/index.html (last accessed on January 30, 2022).

[57] The original report was more or less a warning that economic recovery relying on the social reconstruction after the war had possibly ended. As for the social remembrance of the 1956 white paper, see Shimizu.

consumption. Cultural products were strongly associated with industrial capitalism: they "showed the consumers what they should be, what they should aspire to, what they should consume in order to confirm their middle-class status" (Ivy 247). It is in this context of the mass consumption society that the sisterboy, as well as other well-known media-constructed icons, came into prominence and quickly disappeared.

Japan's film industry contributed to stimulating media crazes through the scandalization of gender and sexuality. For example, the *yoromeki* boom of 1957 led to the commodification of women's sexuality. Based on Mishima Yukio's original novel, Nakahira Kō's *Bitoku no yoromeki* (*Fresh is Weak*, 1957) was released and caused an instant sensation for its thematic concern: women's adultery. In this context, *yoromeki* refers to two things: women having affairs and thus stumbling in life. The popularity of the film resulted in moralistic (and frequently misogynistic) magazine articles concerning women's sexuality and more productions of similar films.[58] The fact that women's adultery received fervent attention indicates that sexuality was turned into a media spectacle for people to consume.

Another cultural icon that stirred enormous controversy is the so-called "sun tribe" (*taiyō-zoku*). It generally refers to a group of young people, wearing Hawaiian shirts and sunglasses, who hung out at beach resorts. The controversy over juvenile delinquency was caused more by the media than actual frustrated youths. The sun tribe phenomenon was initiated by Ishihara Shintarō's prize-winning novella *Taiyō no kisetsu* (*Season of the Sun*, 1956), which unapologetically tackled the subjects of sex and violence among contemporary youths. Due to its profit potential, the novella and other Ishihara's works were quickly adapted for the screen, resulting in the production of five "sun tribe films"

[58] For details of the *yoromeki* boom and its impact, see Kōno.

by the end of 1956.[59] A characteristic of *taiyō-zoku* films is that they mark the severance of generational ties between the war-experienced and those who were too young during wartime. The sun tribe youths are mostly spoiled, middle-class teenagers with rich parents, unconcerned about the defeat and the revival of Japanese society. They represent post-war consumer society by spending time on yachts, engaging in sex and violence, and ignoring all the struggles of the older generation (Mabuchi 42). The newly-emerged image of Japanese youths was particularly embodied by one movie star: Ishihara Yūjirō, Ishihara Shintarō's younger brother. Making a sensational acting debut with *Taiyō no kisetsu*, Yūjirō, who has iconic long legs, personified *taiyō-zoku*'s philosophy. Yūjirō and the characters he played had everything male youths should desire: yachts, women, and nice bodies.[60] According to Isolde Standish, "Under the conditions of a re-emergent consumerist economy, masculinity increasingly became re-refined in the commodity terms of a narcissistic desire to be channeled in to consumption" (*A New History* 226). Yūjirō and *taiyō-zoku* were at the center of the circulation of commodities, images, and consumers' wants, affirming their desire to desire more. Disguised as a critique of juvenile delinquency, the media bashing of the *taiyō-zoku* phenomenon can also be understood as a temporary reaction to the development of a mass consumption society. As argued by Mabuchi Kōsuke, the attack on *taiyō-zoku* centered on the films' depictions and philosophies and was motivated by a fear of youths becoming *taiyō-zoku* (53). This means that cultural icons are threatening because they can function as references for our actions, to the extent that people might want to imitate them. In other words, the threat of the sun

[59] The "sun tribe films" generally refer to Furukawa Takumi's *Taiyō no kisetsu* (*Season of the Sun*, 1956), Ichikawa Kon's *Shokei no heya* (*Punishment Room*, 1956), Nakahira's *Kurutta kajitsu* (*Crazed Fruit*, 1956), Furukawa's *Gyakukōsen* (*Backlight*, 1956), and Horikawa Hiromichi's *Nisshoku no natsu* (*Summer Eclipse*, 1956).

[60] Nishiwaki Hideo recalls that people in the lower-class had a mixture of admiration and contempt towards Yūjirō, for his bourgeois status and his freedom to not work (86).

tribe does not necessarily come from their immoral behavior, but its enticing depiction of what contemporary youths should want.

As cultural icons are in a reciprocal relationship with industrial capitalism, the dangerous *taiyō-zoku* image quickly evolved to take on a more easily consumable form. Despite the fact that film companies ceased the production of sun tribe films due to social pressure in 1956, youth films survived and became more accessible. The cinematic continuation of youth images is especially evident in the transformation of Yūjirō's star persona. As argued by Michael Raine,

> He arrived with a nice body and a bad attitude: both together made up his impersonation of a new kind of modern young masculinity associated with the *taiyôzoku*. But with the attacks on the *taiyôzoku*, he lost the attitude and kept the body. (213)

As the result of the transition from a juvenile delinquent to friendly Yū-chan, the threatening body Yūjirō exhibited on screen in the summer of 1956 was domesticated to be "ineffably, albeit somewhat violently, Japanese" (Raine 218). Although the *taiyō-zoku* phenomenon depicted problematic behavior of Japanese youths, such intimidating images were readily normalized and converted into attractively exotic bodies for consumption.

Previous research has attempted to uncover the kind of societal fears towards and imaginations about *taiyō-zoku* that existed. For example, the "Western" body of Yūjirō could have been seen as a doppelgänger of the US (Yoshimi, *Shinbei* 148–149) and the *taiyō-zoku* phenomenon itself might have provided a phallogocentric fantasy which dismissed Japan's castration after the defeat (Saitō, "50-nendai" 82). This kind of

approach is limited because the meaning of cultural icons like the *taiyō-zoku* is arbitrary, unstable, and open to many different interpretations. As Jean Baudrillard argues, while the media offers signs for our consumption, the content of the messages is largely irrelevant as we consume signs as signs (34). It is possible to argue that the *taiyō-zoku* boom provided an appealing image of the narcissistic male body, be it a doppelgänger of the US or a misogynist fantasy. However, what it represents or signifies is unfixed and changeable, ranging from a rebellious youth to amiable Yūjirō, and is thus secondary to the spectacular image it provides. Cultural icons are indifferent to their meanings and are merely consumed for their differences from other images.

The incessant emergence of different media phenomenon in the 1950s Japan can be better grasped using the concept of *būmu* (boom). According to Nakamura Hideyuki, a boom is "a small story in which a society of mass consumption recounts their own temporary transformation through the mediation of mass media" (*Haisha* 165). However, booms eventually negate the possibility of long-term transformation and therefore allow the maintenance of social equilibrium (Nakamura, *Haisha* 171). So long as they are presented as booms, cultural incidents are not threatening since they are destined to disappear. Furthermore, booms are self-fulfilling because they can come into being through self-proclamation. For example, booms can be easily created by mass media through large-scale promotional campaigns that claim that something has become popular. The making of booms is an arbitrary and yet convenient marketing action to present something spectacular as safe and consumable, without exceedingly disturbing the social order.

In the 1950s, booms were at the center of Japan's economic and cultural cycle of production, advertisement, and consumption. Different kinds of media spectacle

constantly appeared to the extent that *būmu* itself was booming (Tsurumi 250).[61] The booming of booms coincided with the rising popularity of weekly magazines, which lived off of the booms they created (Tsurumi 251). It was common for this publishing industry to make booms out of the transgression of sexual mores, like the *yoromeki* and *taiyō-zoku* phenomena. An ideological implication of booms is their ability to commodify the transgression of the gender order and the excessively gendered bodies by transforming them into safe commodities.

Such commodification of gender and sexuality is an indicator that a consumer society has formed in Japan. In it, consumption becomes a defining aspect of people's identities: individuals come to define themselves through what they consume. The structure of consumerism has been theorized by Karl Marx and post-Marxist scholars as commodity fetishism. According to Marx, "There it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things" (105). This means that, in a capitalist society, the value of commodities has come to be seen as intrinsic and independent from the labor that went into their production. Commodity fetishism occurs as a result of "a certain misrecognition which concerns the relation between a structured network and one of its elements" (Žižek 24). Put simply, the value of products seems to be innately attached to them even though it is actually constructed by a network of social relations. The ultimate form of society where the social relations between men are misrecognized as the social relations between things, is a society of spectacles "where the real world is replaced by a selection of images which are projected above it, yet which at the same time succeed in making themselves regarded as the epitome of reality" (Debord 17). The consumer society in the 1950s is an example of a

[61] See Tsurumi for an exhaustive list of booms in the 1950s.

society of spectacle, in which the overflow of images defines social experiences.

The sisterboy craze should be contextualized in Japan's consumer society. As masculine and sexualized bodies of *taiyō-zoku* were proved to be consumable, it should be no surprise that an effeminate counterpart, the sisterboy, appeared. *Taiyō-zoku* and the sisterboy, therefore, are two sides of the same coin of the commodification of the male body, whose values are merely defined by the difference among masculinities.

Here Comes the Sisterboy

The historical details of how the sisterboy migrated to Japan are rather complicated: the term certainly originates from *Tea and Sympathy* but its meaning has changed after its arrival. This section examines how such changes had occurred by closely analyzing historical materials such as movie pamphlets and weekly magazines. The analyses will reveal that, while the sisterboy was originally an ambiguous term to conceal homosexuality, its emigration to Japan caused the secrecy itself to be consumed as a spectacle.

The origin of the sisterboy is clear: Vincente Minnelli's 1956 film, *Tea and Sympathy*. Based on Robert Anderson's stage play of the same name, it is a coming-of-age tale in which an effeminate student, Tom Lee, at a New England preparatory school is bullied by fellow schoolmates. The 1953 Broadway production was highly successful but controversial for its thematic concerns, which included the topics of homosexuality and adultery. In it, Tom faces accusations regarding his sexual orientation due to his association with a homosexual teacher, and affectionate Laura Reynolds, the housemaster's wife, consoles him by bedding him. The homosexuality of the teacher is

clearly articulated,[62] and Laura's body functions as a "cure" for Tom to attain appropriate manhood. Naturally, the Production Code Administration (PCA) was reluctant to agree to MGM's suggestion to make a cinematic adaptation of the play. This is because homosexuality and the justification of adultery (as both parties go unpunished in the play) clearly violate Hollywood's ethical guidelines, the Motion Picture Production Code, which enforcement started in 1934.[63] To find a middle ground, Dore Schary, MGM's head of production, had numerous meetings with the PCA until two solutions were agreed upon. First, Anderson, who served as the screenwriter, came up with the idea of using a flashback (Simmons 7). Therefore, in the film version, the original play is framed as one long flashback as memories of Tom, who visits his school after ten years and starts reminiscing the past. After the flashback, the protagonist discovers an unsent letter by Laura, who expresses regret for her misconduct that led to the destruction of her marriage. The letter, which documents the punishment she received for her wrongdoing, serves to undo the therapeutic justification of adultery. Second, Schary proposed to drop homosexuality and "center the boy's problem on the fact that he was an 'off-horse'" (Simmons 6). Thus, in the film version, Tom is just a strangely unmasculine student who is into artistic activities, such as sewing and taking the lead female role in a school play. On account of his feminine characteristics, Tom is bestowed with an undesirable nickname: sisterboy. The birth of the sisterboy is, therefore, a direct result of Hollywood's attempt to silence homosexuality under the Production Code.[64]

---

[62] For example, Tom's father, Herb Lee's line: "All right, I'll say it plain, Tom. He's a fairy. A homosexual" (R. Anderson 36).

[63] In the sex section of the Code, "1. *Adultery and Illicit Sex*, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated, or justified, or presented attractively" and "4. *Sex perversion* or any inference of it is forbidden" (Doherty 352–353; highlighted in the original). For the full version, see Doherty.

[64] It does not mean, however, that the audience did not spot homosexual undertones. As noted by George Chauncey, "While the censorship board could prevent the characters in the film from *saying*

The sisterboy, as well as the MGM production of *Tea and Sympathy* itself, is an exemplary case of the construction of the closet. According to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "'Closetedness' itself is a performance initiated as such by the speech act of a silence […] in relation to the discourse that surrounds and differentially constitutes it" (*Epistemology* 3). When secret knowledge of one's sexuality develops into an object of silent curiosity in the public gaze, the unspeakability of the sexuality becomes, what Sedgwick calls, "the closet viewed, the *spectacle of the closet*" (*Epistemology* 222).[65] Turning to Sedgwick's theory, David Gerstner readily spots the spectacle of the homosexual closet in the making of *Tea and Sympathy*:

> Not only is the film a marker of the spectacle of the closet, but the spectacle of the closet is generated, displayed, and reinforced precisely through the discourses of the making of the text and, more precisely, through the making of the film's structured silence. (14)

If *Tea and Sympathy* constitutes and strengthens the closet, the sisterboy verbally embodies such silence. The combination of the two opposite-gendered nouns (sister + boy) somehow seems to explain Tom's effeminate character as an issue of manhood, not sexuality. As a result, the closetedness is predicated on the pretense of not knowing what everybody seems to know about Tom's sexual orientation, which now becomes a spectacle.

Upon the Japanese release of the film, the spectacle of the closet came to be

---

they thought Tom's gender nonconformity meant he was gay, it could not prevent American audiences from inferring that" (261; highlighted in the original).

[65] Highlighted in the original.

constituted by different discursive practices from those in the US: that is, the silence surrounding Tom's sexuality is broken and instead used as a marketing device to sell the film. Titled as *Ocha to dōjō* (a literal translation of the original), *Tea and Sympathy* was released in February 1957. Iseki Masao, an advertising manager at MGM Japan, has clearly documented his marketing plan for the film in his 1965 publication. Although Iseki's book is commonly referred to by today's writers and scholars to describe the sisterboy craze, the accuracy of the information in the book is highly questionable.[66] Tentatively, the following is the official narrative to Iseki's recollection: a core strategy of *Tea and Sympathy*'s marketing campaign was spreading a buzzword to promote consumer interest, and that potential buzzword was none other than "sisterboy." As the word itself was not commonly known in Japan, it was possible to popularize it as a new, fashionable, sexy term. As a means to promote the word, he disseminated the buzzword at gay bars and to weekly magazines and collaborated with Nippon Columbia to publicize a chanson singer Maruyama Akihiro as a sisterboy. One drawback, however, was that the popularization of the sisterboy did not lead to the increased recognition of *Tea and Sympathy*; the buzzword and the film title should have been the same (Iseki 86–93). What Iseki's writing describes is precisely the construction of a boom to advertise the film.

However, there is more to *Tea and Sympathy*'s advertisement than what Iseki recounts. Primary sources reveal that their strategy was to make a scandal out of the fact that the original play dealt with adultery and homosexuality, causing the film version to suffer from the Code's regulation. While it is true that the marketing team did try to disseminate a buzzword, the term circulated was in fact the "tea and sympathy tribe"

[66] The sisterboy boom has been recounted mostly in books and articles on Maruyama's career. See, for example, Kanno and Toyoda.

(*ocha to dōjō zoku*), and not "sisterboy." The pamphlets of *Tea and Sympathy*, for instance, mention that before the release of the film, the term "tea and sympathy tribe" was already popular (Shin Sekai unpaginated; Gaikoku 3). In a similar manner, two magazine articles note that the term "tea and sympathy tribe" had been a buzzword since the autumn of the previous year, even before the release of the film ("Ocha to Dōjō" 85; "Ocha to Dōjō to Deborah" 63). Despite a dearth of articles (which raises the question of how "buzzing" the buzzword actually was), *Shūkan Shinchō* did cover the new tribe in July 1956. In the article, it briefly mentions the emergence of the "tea and sympathy tribe" around the Ginza area and describes where the word comes from: the American film *Tea and Sympathy* ("Shin Ryūkōgo" 11). The rest of the description contains scandalous details about the film, such as homosexuality at a boarding school and an affair between a homosexual student and a teacher's wife ("Shin" 11). The description also refers to the Code's revision because of the film's problematic thematic concerns ("Shin" 11). Poorly elaborated in the article, the "tea and sympathy tribe" merely served as an empty signifier, and the article's only objective was to highlight the scandalous nature of the advertised film.

Other contemporary articles and film reviews on *Tea and Sympathy*, to a certain degree, call attention to or complain about the film's mild presentation of the shocking topics. Futaba Junzaburō, for example, explains in detail in an article why and how the two topics, homosexuality and adultery, had to be regulated by the Hollywood production code (56–59). At the same time, film reviews were critical of the film's treatment of the controversial topics. While reviewer Ozaki Hirotsugu did not hide his disappointment with the film's exclusion of "dangerous elements" (58), Shinada Yūkichi bluntly called it

"a failure" as the omission of homosexuality resulted in a weaker narrative (92).[67] The significance of these articles and reviews is that they inform us that the Code's regulation regarding the adaptation of *Tea and Sympathy* was common knowledge among Japanese writers and reviewers.

Iseki's promotional objective of using sex to sell the film made the homosexual closet a spectacle for consumption. His initial approach was to invent a buzzword, the "tea and sympathy tribe," to scandalize the extramarital relations in the film (an analogy to *taiyō-zoku* cannot be left unnoticed). Although the attempt to spread the term "tea and sympathy tribe" seemed to have ended up failing, it at least led to the wider recognition of the film's negotiation with the PCA. The marketing campaign is telling that the unspeakability of homosexuality itself turned into a Sedgwickian spectacle in the Japanese context. Multiple scandals concerning *Tea and Sympathy* – the challenging topics and the Code's regulation of them – became significant publicity material that was used to effectively advertise the film. The spectacle of the closet, therefore, came into being, not by a silent speech act, but by a media campaign which discursively constituted homosexuality as an extraordinary secret that should be scandalously exposed.

It was *after* the initial Japanese release of *Tea and Sympathy* that the sisterboy gained momentum. To be more precise, the widespread recognition of the word coincided with the rising popularity of Maruyama Akihiro. Currently known as Miwa Akihiro, the chanson singer was born in Nagasaki in 1935 and moved to Tokyo in 1951 to pursue a singing career. Surviving a near-homeless life by working as a part-time singer and bartender, Maruyama made his debut as a professional singer in 1952 at then-cabaret

[67] Mishima reads the film more carefully: focusing on how the film's flashback structure eventually questions the sexuality of Bill Reynolds, Lura's husband, he notes, "Those who get it, get it" (232).

Ginparis. Despite Ginparis's reorganization as a chanson café in 1955, it suffered financially in the following year due to multiple popular bands and singers leaving the café. Resisting an impulse to leave the café too, Maruyama decided to stay at Ginparis and contributed to the revitalization of the café. Maruyama's plan was what Toyoda Masayoshi calls a "costume revolution" (112). Inspired by Genroku fashion, especially that of *koshō* (an errand boy from a samurai family), Maruyama created an original androgynous style that can be characterized by blouses with white lace, strong eyeshadow, and red lipstick, among others.[68] Dressed in such a gender-bending manner, Maruyama walked on the streets of Ginza and sang chanson on Ginparis's stage. His gender non-conforming performance, both on and off stage, did get attention, which led to his breakout success in the following year. For Maruyama, the year 1957 started with a stage performance for a New Year program at the Nichigeki Music Hall, and was followed by a film debut in May, a solo recital at Hibiya Public Hall in July, and a release of his first record "Me que me que" from Nippon Columbia in September. Equipped with an alluringly androgynous image, Maruyama quickly rose to stardom in one year.[69]

As Maruyama's popularity grew, the sisterboy label became increasingly attached to his persona. The height of the sisterboy craze was around July and August 1957 after the legendary recital at Hibiya Public Hall. Referring to Maruyama as "a Japan-made sisterboy" ("Enshutsusareta Tōsaku" 60), a number of weekly magazine articles reported on the emerging chanson singer. Some articles were rather critical of his sisterboy image, since they believe Maruyama's popularity stemmed more from his purposefully business-oriented, gender non-conforming style than his artistry as a singer

[68] Regarding Maruyama's fashion style and its transformation, see Mitsuhashi ("Miwa").
[69] For details of Maruyama's career, see Toyoda.

("Funsō" 13; "Maruyama" 17). For better or worse, Maruyama's public recognition bestowed a tangible body to a floating signifier, the sisterboy.

Soon afterwards, the sisterboy was proclaimed as a boom by *Shūkan Asahi Geinō* in its July 21, 1957 issue. Declaring itself as an "anatomy of new male images," the nine-page-long write-up introduced the sisterboy as "the latest type of fashion for city boys" ("Skirt" 11). After a description of persons of culture (*bunkajin*) who could be regarded as sisterboys – Ei Rokusuke, Yokomitsu Shōzō, and Nagasawa Setsu – the article stated that the feminization of young men is inseparable from the presence of older women, and that this kind of dynamic originates from *Tea and Sympathy* ("Skirt" 12–17). These magazine articles created the popular consciousness of the sisterboy as a pet serving his female master by turning the specific narrative of *Tea and Sympathy* into a generalized dynamic between effeminate boys and older women that could be found in real life. In the formation of the sisterboy image, therefore, there were three steps: *Tea and Sympathy* first introduced basic components of what the sisterboy could be, Maruyama later provided his material body with his androgenous style, and weekly magazines attached meaning to the sisterboy image through the boom.

However transgressive Maruyama's gender-bending style was, the ideological project of the sisterboy boom turned his extraordinary body into a consumable product. Despite the sisterboy's homosexual undertones, Maruyama's sexual orientation was mostly locked in the closet while *Tea and Sympathy*'s original queer references were treated by the media as a sheer spectacle. Even when the gayness of sisterboys was mentioned, it was done in an insignificant and trivial manner ("Skirt" 17) or reduced to a cliché argument of the emergence of feminine men and masculine women (Ikeda 173). The lack of elaboration of sexual ambiguity, therefore, neutralized the potential

transgressive quality of sisterboys. In a year-end article in 1957, Minami Hiroshi discusses an ideological effect of the development of mass communication. Regarding the massive production of booms, including *taiyō-zoku*, *yoromeki*, and the sisterboy, Minami contends that mass media can cause the familiarization of extraordinary images to the extent that an abnormality is desensitized (8).[70] As booms are innately temporary and serve to preserve the status quo, the sisterboy boom was a sensation that made extraordinary phenomena more accessible for consumption. Therefore, Maruyama's androgenous style was inevitably transformed into a consumable image of the sisterboy.

It was in this respect that the sisterboy craze became an exemplary case of the society of the spectacle. In the American context, the sisterboy in *Tea and Sympathy* was an embodiment of homosexual silence, which discursively constructed and strengthened the closet. The Japanese release of the film further reinforced the closet by using the unspeakability of homosexuality as marketing material. The visibility of Maruyama, however, offered a distinctive style and body to the previously empty effeminate signifier. Through the migration of the sisterboy from the US to Japan, the closet was produced and strengthened by playing with the line between what can and cannot be said about homosexuality. The making of the sisterboy boom offered the spectacle of the closet as a commodity, while what the sisterboy is or how it came into being bear no significance.

The Sisterboy on Screen

The sisterboy fashion is not merely an androgynous style that Maruyama

[70] That being said, Minami's view on this tendency is positive. He argues that the familiarization of something extraordinary can affect our daily practices and produce a new lifestyle (8).

invented for himself: once this kind of image became widely acknowledged through the boom, it quickly circulated and became a recognizable icon. Particularly, Japanese films took advantage of the sisterboy boom and depicted sexually ambiguous figures on screen. This section examines the cinematic representation of the sisterboy to investigate how the sisterboy image was reduced into a particular modern style that generates affective sensations in viewers, or what Carl Plantinga calls, direct emotion, "the physical responses generated by shot composition, camera movement, montage, color, and sound" (114).

Generally, sisterboy films can be divided into the following two types: the ones with Maruyama and the ones without him. The chanson singer made his film debut in Tanaka Shigeo's *Nagasugita haru* (*The Betrothed*, 1957), a film adaptation of Mishima's novel, thanks to his screenwriter friend Shirasaka Yoshio who gave him a cameo singing role.[71] During the sisterboy craze, Maruyama continued to take on tiny singing roles in films such as Masumura's *Danryū* (*Warm Current*, 1957) and Kawashima Yūzō's *Onna de aru koto* (*Being a Woman*, 1958). However, it is not the purpose of this research to examine Maruyama's performance in these films as his star persona overshadowed the conventional sisterboy image.[72] Rather, the chapter aims to disassociate the sisterboy from Maruyama's persona, and uncover the imagined image of the sisterboy in *Taifū*

[71] The story of how it happened begins at a legendary gay café/bar Brunswick in the early 1950s. Back then, Brunswick was a cultural hub, frequently visited by prestigious writers like Edogawa Ranpō, and this is where Shirasaka got acquainted with then-bartender Maruyama and regular customer Mishima. Despite Maruyama's dismissal in 1951, their reunion came later when Shirasaka started working as a screenwriter. Being the son of established screenwriter Yasumi Toshio, Shirasaka was a college dropout in need of money when he signed a contract with Daiei in 1955. Upon the adaptation of Mishima's novel, not only did Shirasaka pen a screenplay, but he also brought the director to Ginparis to give a cameo role to Maruyama. The film is a small Brunswick reunion – Maruyama, Mishima, and Shirasaka – while Maruyama received his first film credit.

[72] For a political reading of Maruyama's subversive function in *Onna de aru koto*, see Kanno.

musuko and *Kekkon no subete*.[73] In these films, it is possible to see how the sisterboy was associated with a particular style that characterizes the consumer society of the 1950s in Japan.

The term style here has two different meanings. The first meaning is on the level of appearance, referring to the androgynous fashion often associated with the sisterboy, which was largely created by Maruyama as previously mentioned. This iconic fashion served as a visual marker for viewers to identify the sisterboy on screen. The second meaning refers to formal techniques, such as montage and camera movement associated with the sisterboy. A call for paying closer attention to the relationship between gender representation and cinematic style has been voiced by Stella Bruzzi in *Men's Cinema* (2013). In it, Bruzzi problematizes how investigations of masculinity in film studies almost exclusively focus on representation (6–7). Bruzzi proposes an alternative approach, to draw more attention to the ways in which masculinity on screen is constructed by style and aesthetics. Such a method is not restricted by the gender binary that predetermines spectators' identification with images on screen based on their sex. As cinematic aesthetics are constructed through style and *mise-en-scène*, "The performative ambiguities and fluidities that characterise 'men's cinema' make it possible for it to be *inclusive* rather than exclusive of the genders and sexualities" (Bruzzi 22).[74] Bruzzi's approach not only goes beyond the examination of masculine representation based on the gender binary, but also underlines the power of cinema in creating affective sensations in the audience through style and aesthetics. Bruzzi's approach is particularly effective in

[73] Characters that can be regarded as sisterboy appear in *Aozora musume* and Komori Kiyoshi's *Taiyō musume to shachō-zoku* (*Sun Girls and the Tribe of Presidents*, 1958) as well. Also, Yoshimura Ren's *Tokyo yarō to onna domo* features a protagonist who happens to become a sisterboy. I have not got a chance to watch the rare film but the script is available at the Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum of Waseda University.

[74] Emphasized in the original.

analyzing the representation of the sisterboy, since it is closely linked to formal techniques that convey the experiences of a consumer society stylistically.

The cinematic style that characterizes the sisterboy arose in the late 1950s, when the Japanese film industry saw the emergence of young filmmakers with innovative styles. The outburst of *taiyō-zoku* films was not merely an indicator of the celebration of consumer culture; newly-emerging talents who directed these films also established new cinematic styles. As Ōshima Nagisa recalls, "In the rip of a woman's skirt and the buzz of a motorboat, sensitive people heard the heralding of a new generation of Japanese film" (26). Ōshima's analysis centers on three representatives of modernist filmmakers – Nakahira, Masumura, and Shirasaka. They attempted to break free from the structural formula of narrative films, namely *jidaigeki* and *Shimpa*-like melodrama (Oshima 28–29) and instead equipped themselves with the so-called three Ss, "speed, thrills [*suriru* in Japanese], and sex" (Oshima 33). As represented by *taiyō-zoku* films, the most fundamental characteristic of modernist films is their particular focus on strong stimulation instead of emotional appeal. The cinematic depictions of the sisterboy cannot be inseparable from such contexts and the style of the modernist filmmakers. Specifically, effeminacy was reduced into a generator of affective sensations, such as sexual and thrilling sensations, produced by cinematic styles. In the end, what was important was not what the sisterboy was, but how the sisterboy made people feel.

An example of the sisterboy can be seen in *Taifū musuko*. In one scene, two high school students take on a modeling job at the Pacific Nude Studio to make a handsome profit. As the manager enters "the sisterboy room" and welcomes middle-aged female customers, the students get on the stage. Once the spotlight is turned on, the women have their breaths taken away by what is presented: one sisterboy and one Tarzan-like wild

man. The oversexed female customers gradually approach the models and cannot resist from touching their bodies, while the students express their discomfort.[75] As the accompanying music accelerates in a pronounced rhythm, the camera switches from medium shot to medium close-up to capture the objectified students who eventually run away after they can no longer tolerate the women's physical approach. Here, the sisterboy is merely an image performed by the young man for the sake of women's consumption.

Not only is the scene a textbook example of the commodification of the male body, but the film also comically and affectively satirizes consumer society by relying on formal techniques (lighting, music, and cinematography) to make it thrilling, erotic, and sensational.[76] The sisterboy was evidently portrayed as an object of consumption, intended for the women to photograph and physically engage with. The use of spotlighting especially enhances the effect that the performance was meant to be consumed. In that sense, it can be argued that the erotic objectification of the male body is enhanced through feminization, as Steve Neale suggests (14–15). The scene shows a rare instance in which men are not allowed to be the sole possessors of the erotic gaze through the use of the sisterboy. Having said that, the film does not merely challenge male gaze but also comically depicts the men's uneasiness of being objectified through the production of affective sensations. In the scene, the rhythmic music and the camera that transitions from a shot framing the students at a moderate distance to a closer shot amplify the *yoromeki* ladies' impulse to physically touch the male bodies and the sisterboy's discomfort that comes from being sexually desired. By playing with the dynamics of objectification, the

[75] In the script available at the Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum of Waseda University, the women are described as *yoromeki* ladies, which associate the sisterboy with the *yoromeki* boom (Yagisawa a-28).

[76] Also in *Hanran* (*Flood*, 1959), a group of unsatisfied married women go to what seems to be a boy's bar for women.

scene satirizes the captivating yet grotesque nature of consumer society.

Another film that satirizes consumer culture with the appearance of the sisterboy is *Kekkon no subete*. It is a directorial debut of Okamoto Kihachi, which recounts a tale of how contemporary romance is shaped by the law of the market. A distinctive feature of the film can be found in its opening montage sequence that causes a disjuncture between the narration and the image. On a superficial level, it is a critique of modern cities, like Tokyo, which are morally corrupt because of the excessive commodification of sex. The opening sequence begins with a shot of a semi-naked couple who are passionately making out in a boat near the seaside. As the camera pulls out from the couple and unveils the presence of the filming crew with shooting equipment, it is revealed that the kiss was done for a film within the film. The voiceover laments these films that provoke carnal pleasure and the overflow of sex in modern Tokyo in general. From alluring jazz music to bus advertisements, the opening sequence shows how modern culture is inseparable from sexual stimuli. On a visual level, however, the opening sequence is edited in a fast-moving, talkative, jazzy, and captivating manner. Accompanied by an uplifting piece of jazz music, fun images of an unapologetically sexual and vigorous modern lifestyle are shown in a montage. In spite of the conservative narrator that criticizes modern life, the visuals of the opening montage betray this and the sequence is directed to be enjoyable for viewers.

The celebration of sexual desire is strongly tied to the commodification of human bodies. Obviously referring to *taiyō-zoku* films, the passionate kiss is scandalously exposed so that the narrator can point out that such disgraceful scenes do not take place in this film. Clearly, however, this is ironical and contradictory as the film *does* include and sexualize the flesh of young people through emphasizing bare legs, for example. In

another instance, as the camera tilts down and then up to capture the bodies of two modern women, the narrator criticizes the obscenity of one woman while praising the elegance of the other. Soon after, it is revealed that the elegant one was, in that scene, seriously reading the Japanese translation of a Western sexological book about women's eroticism. Thus, modern experiences are turned into sexual experiences and consumers themselves become sexual beings, mediated by advertisements and products.

The sisterboy is part of this sex-driven consumer society. When the narrator poses the question, "Is your sex male or female?" the film focuses on the lower part of the bodies of two people, both wearing women's shoes. As the camera tilts up, it is revealed that the two people are, albeit feminized, played by male actors. Using women's language, however, they express anger for being mistaken as men despite identifying as women.[77] The way these sisterboys are depicted in this scene is similar to the approach taken in other instances in the same sequence that satirizes consumer society. The playful mismatch of the verbal and the visual subverts the expectations of the audience. In response to the narrator's binary question, the visual ironically and jokingly shows that they are sisterboys in a twist. This betrayal of expectation can be seen as one of the components of the sequence that values surprise, spectacles, and eroticism. Along with speed, jazz, and the semi-naked bodies of the couple, the sisterboy is also one of the images in the sequence that generate affective responses.

As such, the opening sequence of *Kekkon no subete* cogently informs us what the film is: a celebratory tale of consumer culture conveyed through affective sensations, especially through editing. Frequently referred to by contemporary critics as a fast-paced

[77] While these characters can be identified as transgender women in today's understanding, they are credited as sisterboys in the opening credit.

film, its manipulation of speed is generated by playful editing tricks, notably the abrupt usage of match cuts.[78] There is an abundance of examples: a student's utterance "I'm hungry" is quickly followed by a shot of men eating noodles, the sound of footsteps smoothly transitions into that of radio time signals, and a line in a play, "Please go to the second floor," is followed by a shot of the main character ushered upstairs. Such amusing editing techniques do not seem to hold any significance, except that they contribute to the smooth transition of scenes and make the film appear fashionable (Hoshi 77). In other words, the film's stylistic choice is merely for style's sake. As such, the experiences of consumer culture are not only depicted in the narrative but also highlighted through affective sensations that offer fun, speed, and playful feelings.

The sisterboy is one of the cultural icons that went widespread in Japan's consumer society. The cinematic employment of the sisterboy is more satirical than critical, and more stylistic than realistic, making it a consumable spectacle that elicits affective sensations. Like Yūjirō's legs, the sisterboy is another extraordinary image that is attractive because of what it can make people feel, and not what it can mean.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the sisterboy craze of 1957 and how effeminacy turned into a commodifiable spectacle. As the historical investigation has shown, the term originates from the American film *Tea and Sympathy* in which the sisterboy embodied the closeted silence of homosexuality. When the film was released in Japan, the closet became a spectacle by exploiting the unspeakability of homosexuality for marketing purposes. It

[78] For contemporary reviews, see *kihachi*.

is *after* the release of the film that the sisterboy was bestowed with a distinctive image and style due to the rising popularity of Maruyama. His androgynous style quickly established itself as a particular sisterboy image and this image started appearing on screens. The sisterboy was utilized as a convenient image to quickly represent an extraordinary body in consumer society and became a meaningless spectacle that generated affective sensations.

The investigation of the sisterboy craze unveils that the effeminate cultural icon emerged in consumer society, along with the booms of *taiyō-zoku* and *yoromeki*. Although previous research focused on the spectacular bodies of masculinity and femininity, effeminacy can be examined in a way similar to how *taiyō-zoku* and *yoromeki* were analyzed, as a case of the scandalization of the body. Thus, the construction of different booms should not be analyzed as standalone phenomena, but rather as a result of consumer culture in Japan. It is also essential to consider how formal techniques conveyed media-generated images on the cinematic screen during a time characterized by affective sensations. These views would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the representation of gender and sexuality, and consumer society in Japanese cinema.

The sisterboy craze, like all media-constructed booms, was destined to be short-lived and has now become a forgotten media phenomenon. Despite making little social change, however, the significance of the sisterboy lies in how Maruyama's style has influenced later cultures. In the late 1950s, for example, it had a tremendous impact on the fashion of the gay boy (Mitsuhashi, "Miwa" 214). The sisterboy boom itself might have been a politically unsatisfying project but it did lead to the greater visibility of queer culture in Japan. Now the torch is passed to the gay boy, which will be discussed in the

next chapter.

Chapter 4

The Gay Boy:
The Conceptualization of Male Homosexuality

Based on Togawa Masako's murder mystery novel, Nakahira Kō's *Ryōjin nikki* (*The Hunter's Diary*, 1964) includes a sequence in which lawyer Hatanaka Kentarō (Kitamura Kazuo) drops by a gay bar called Bonsoir for investigation purposes. The scene of several bartenders and customers, in a dimly-lit interior, chitchatting loudly and rapidly about the love life of flirtatious bar owner Mitsuko is captured in long shots. Tired of waiting for the arrival of the owner, Hatanaka leaves Bonsoir only to bump into Mitsuko at the entrance. In response to the lawyer's inquiry regarding strange customers, Mitsuko recalls in detail, in refined women's language, an unnerving experience that took place in January. It was about an unpleasant customer with a recognizable mole on their face, who presented themselves as a man but could have been female. Slightly upset but also strangely excited about this frightful experience, Mitsuko suddenly gives a big hug to Hatanaka, as a somewhat humorous way to conclude this supposedly serious sequence. This implies that by the time the film was produced, a commonly shared image of gay boys had already been established (albeit superficial and misguided) in Japanese society, as those who work at gay bars and engage with strange customers.

This chapter investigates the image of gay boys in Japanese films from 1958 onwards. Together with the opening of gay bars in the early 1950s, the term gay boy, which usually refers to "young people working at gay bars" (Mitsuhashi, "Gay" 315) gradually spread in Japan. The term is an occupational category, unlike the sisterboy

which is more of a media construction. The increasing prevalence of gay bars led to intense media coverage which caused the gay boom in 1958. Due to widely circulated discourses on gay boys, the boom has strongly influenced and shaped societal understandings of sexual minorities (in most cases, male homosexuals and MtF transgenders were not differentiated). Films certainly took advantage of the phenomenon and offered audiences a cinematic gaze into the hidden queer world. When the screen functioned as a peeping device for audiences to take a look at gay bars from a safe distance, what kind of visual pleasure did gay boys offer?

This chapter attempts to answer the above question by exploring the historical conditions of the time and analyzing filmic texts through a crime film framework. First, the chapter looks at social conditions of representability that allowed cinematic depictions of gay boys. They are, namely, the enforcement of the Prostitution Prevention Law, the gay boom in 1958, and remodeling of the Film Ethics Regulation Control Committee (the *Eirin*). Various reconfigurations of sexual mores in post-war Japan resulted in the increased visibility of gay images and therefore the conceptualization of gay boys. The second part examines the visualization of gay boys on the big screen. Their appearance is especially notable in crime films that portray the underworld of the sex industry after the abolishment of red-light districts in Japan. The gay boy was used by crime films in two ways. In one way, these crime films use the gay boy to challenge taken-for-granted notions, such as right/wrong, normal/abnormal, masculine/feminine, and heterosexual/homosexual. In another way, the representation of the gay boy holds a political subtext, symbolizing Japan's subjugated status. In both ways, the increased visibility of gay boys contributed to establishing a framework for the cinematic consumption of male homosexuality.

The Conceptualization of the Gay Boy

The increased visibility of the gay boy in Japanese films from the late 1950s onwards was no coincidence. It was one of the outcomes of changing social dynamics in post-war Japan during its transition from the post-surrender recovery to the era of economic high-growth. Above all else, it was caused by a somewhat contradictory combination of various sexual mores that had been changing in the 1950s. This section describes three social conditions that allowed the screen visibility of gay boys: the Prostitution Prevention Law, the 1958 gay boom, and the reconstitution of the *Eirin*.

The enforcement of the Prostitution Prevention Law in 1958 significantly altered the path of the sex industry in Japan. The constitution of the law directly targeted the abolishment of *akasen*, red-light districts connived by the police. *Akasen* districts originated in the Occupation period when, due to GHQ's order in January 1946, the Japanese government was obliged to ban any legalized system of sex work for a "democratic" purpose (Katō 31). The abolishment of licensed prostitution led to the organization of *akasen* districts in December 1946. In *akasen* districts, sexual services were offered, under the disguise of "free love" between "waitresses" and customers at "special restaurants" (Mitsuhashi, *Shinjuku* 52). Such an obvious disguise was tolerated by the police force as demarcating red-light districts made it convenient for them to control the cases of venereal disease (Mitsuhashi, *Shinjuku* 60–61).[79] *Akasen* was a necessary strategy for both sex industry workers and the police, to sustain their businesses

[79] There is no surprise that *akasen* was originally a term internally used by the police. According to Robert Kramm, "Usually, they [the police] drew red lines (*akasen*) on city maps that simultaneously demarcated those areas (*akasen chiku*) in which police were more likely to tolerate prostitution" (112).

and to supervise where and how prostitution was operated, respectively.

Akasen districts, or the act of prostitution itself, however, were not free from criticism. Though there had been opposition since its inception, it was in the early 1950s that it went under severe scrutiny, mainly by Christian activists and female Diet members.[80] As argued by Sarah Kovner,

> [B]y 1955, the terms of the debate were shifting, to the point that some kind of national anti-prostitution law was becoming inevitable. Sex work, once seen as a necessary evil, or even as a sign of family sacrifice, was now thought to threaten public morals and endanger children. (124)

As a result, the Diet of Japan passed the Prostitution Prevention Law on May 21, 1956 and it went into effect on April 1, 1958. Although the law did contribute to the dissolution of *akasen* districts, its main purpose was not necessarily to impose severe punishment on sex workers as it included a rehabilitation policy. According to Irene González-López, "The act of prostitution itself is prohibited but not penalised; thus the law is particularly severe against individuals and organisations promoting and managing the trade, while avoids the complete criminalisation of the prostitute" (105). Instead, in the government's argument, the purpose of the law was to create "an 'atmosphere' (*kokufū*) that made people realize that making money through prostitution was shameful (*hazukashii*)" (Kovner 130).[81] Thus, the Prostitution Prevention Law implies that prostitution was regarded as a dishonorable profession.

---

[80] For a detailed account of abolitionist movements, see Kovner.

[81] For this reason, "Many female legislators viewed the punishment provisions, guidance dispositions, and protection and rehabilitation sections as woefully inadequate" (Kovner 129).

The implementation of the law had two main impacts on the discussion of the gay boy. First, the sex industry went underground and diversified to adapt to the newly-enacted regulations. It is presumable that the abolishment of the *akasen* districts did not simply lead to the end of prostitution; it only meant that procurers needed to come up with different ideas not to break the law (González-López 109). According to Kovner, "[S]kirting the law's specific provisions led proprietors to diversify, with some offering different services, while others reduced their risks by outsourcing" (141). One of the entertainment facilities that took over the locations of special *akasen* restaurants that went out of business was none other than gay bars. Second, the Prostitution Prevention Law presupposes that sex workers are exclusively female. According to Article 1, it aims to guide, protect, and rehabilitate "such *females* as are apprehended from their character and conduct and environments to prostitute" (Eibun 1).[82] The law "continue[s] to disregard male prostitution" (González-López 106) and ironically makes sure to not impose penalties on male sex workers. Even for entertainment facilities for queer customers like gay bars, the dissolution of the *akasen* districts had a considerable impact on what was allowed and disallowed in the Japanese sex industry.

Around the year when the Prostitution Prevention Law was enforced, Japanese society was filled with excitement over a temporary gay boom, triggered by a plethora of weekly magazine articles. Sudden media interest in queer culture was an incidental outcome of the slow but steady increase in the number of gay bars since the immediate post-war period. The first gay bar after the war was presumably Yanagi, opened in Shinbashi in 1950, and the number had grown to nearly 60 in Tokyo in 1958 (Mitsuhashi, "Gay" 314; McLelland, *Queer Japan* 107). The increase in number was facilitated by the

[82] Italics mine.

abolishment of *akasen* districts. As noted by Mark McLelland, "As many businesses that had relied on heterosexual prostitution closed down or restructured their activities, space was opened up in former red-light areas for new sex-related businesses, including those catering to homosexual men and cross-dressers" (*Queer Japan* 106). The influence of the Prostitution Prevention Law on the expansion of gay bars was not immediate, but rather a gradual process. It was not until the late 1960s that Shinjuku Ni-chōme (Shinjuku's second ward), a former *akasen* area, became established as Tokyo's gay district (Fushimi 167–171). Hence, the gay boom in 1958 was more of a passing phase amidst the cultural formation and spatial expansion of the Japanese queer community.

The operation of gay bars was more complicated in the 1950s than it sounds today. This is because male homosexuals and cross-dressers were concurrently present, sharing the same label of gay boys. It was not until the 1970s that gay bars underwent diversification to clearly differentiate entertainment facilities for cisgender homosexual people and those who identify as transgender (Mitsuhashi, "Gay" 316). In that sense, although McLelland claims that gay boys rejected aggressive masculinity and traditional femininity by "embody[ing] the new androgynous ideal of beauty" (*Queer Japan* 111), this is historically inaccurate or at least misleading. Thus, when discussing the situation of gay bars in the 1950s, the term gay boy should be treated cautiously as it incorporates diverse gender identifications and sexual orientations.

Despite such complexities, the gay boom has significantly contributed to the discursive construction of the simplified image of gay boys. The boom prompted the publication of articles on gay boys and established ideas about where they are and how they look like. First, gay boys were strongly associated with their occupational space, gay bars. An article published by *Sunday Mainichi* scandalously revealed the increased

presence of gay boys due to the growing number of gay bars. To explain the popularity of gay bars, the article provides three possible attractive points: "glamor and services," "thrills," and "wit" ("Joseika" 23). The appeal of gay bars, explained by the article, was more or less based on the skills and services gay boys were capable of providing. Unlike male prostitutes who were not bound to specific facilities, gay boys belonged to gay bars, allowing them to become Tokyo's new attraction (Tomita 88). Furthermore, tabloid reports paid particular attentions to how gay boys dressed and looked like. In *Shūkan Taishū*, for instance, their self-fashioning was characterized by a very short hairstyle called the "Cécile cut," light make-up with lipstick, slim slacks with pink pantyhose, and Chanel No. 5 ("5000" 25).[83] The article, though questionable in credibility, described in detail and included pictures of gay boys' androgenous self-fashioning, which was possibly inherited from Maruyama's sisterboy style. In addition, it quotes a gay boy who had progressive views on sexuality and considered themselves "cultural women" (*bunka josei*) ("5000" 25). In McLelland's understanding of "cultural women," "they had acquired their femininity by incorporating particular sartorial codes and modes of behavior associated with cultural constructions of the feminine" (*Queer Japan* 109). Although it is again contentious to what extent we can generalize the gay boy's self-identification and appropriation of the feminine by relying on tabloid articles, it can be at least argued that gay boys were *imagined* as those who wished to attain the socially constructed codes of refined feminine behaviors and gender-non-normative self-fashioning. Thus, the gay boom was significant not only because of the heightened visibility of gay boys, but also because of the discursive formation of the gay image,

[83] The Cécile cut is a Japan-made English word, inspired by Jean Seberg's very short haircut in *Bonjour Tristesse* (1958).

namely the construction of what people think who gay boys are.

The establishment of the gay image caused by the media craze resulted in the regulation of homosexuality in films. Due to the increased visibility, the term gay boy was added to the *Eirin*'s ethical guidelines as one of the depictions that require careful attention. This was one of the outcomes attributed to the reorganization of the *Eirin* as a third-party institution in 1956. The main cause of its reformation can be ascribed to the *Eirin*'s passivity when dealing with the impact of films on youth, which was their primary concern in the early 1950s (Nakamura, *Sengo* 35).[84] For instance, the release of *Aku no tanoshisa* (*In Bad Company*, 1954), which depicts a series of immoral and unlawful behavior, induced massive criticism against its vulgarity, misogyny, and affirmation of the evil (Kuwahara 42–43). As a response to the criticism, the *Eirin* introduced a set of criteria for adult-themed films and formed the Youth Film Committee in 1955. Yet the actual effect of these measures was highly questionable, as films with scandalous themes were not directly regulated. In the following year, the continuous release of *taiyō-zoku* films, which had unapologetic attitudes towards sex and violence among youth, sparked yet another public outrage, especially of educational organizations and Parent-Teacher Associations, and led to public distrust of the performance of the *Eirin* as a regulatory committee within the film industry.[85] As a result, the organizing committee was formed and the old-*Eirin* was dissolved and reconstructed as a third-party institution, called the Film Control Committee (commonly referred to as the new-*Eirin*).[86] The new committee was officially established on December 1, 1956 and came into operation from the start of

[84] Regulating the negative impact of films on youth was the result of governmental pressure to protect young people from harmful cultural products. For details, see Endō.
[85] For a detailed account of the *taiyō-zoku* scandal, see Endō.
[86] The representative members of the organizing committee include Okawa Hiroshi, Hori Kyūsaku, Taguchi Suketarō, Shiotsugu Hideo, and Leo Hochstetter (*Eiga Nenkan* 453).

the following year.

After the establishment of the new regulatory committee, a task that remained was the updating of the Motion Picture Code of Ethics, originally implemented in June 1949. The revision itself was undertaken by film industry personnel who were members of the *Eirin* Preservation Committee (the former organizing committee) and contributed to the formation of the new-*Eirin* (*Eiga Rinri Kitei* unpaginated). The newly-revised version of the Motion Picture Code of Ethics was agreed upon and enacted at the general meeting of the *Eirin* Preservation Committee on August 10, 1959. Upon the receipt of the new Motion Picture Code of Ethics, Takahashi Seiichirō, the chairperson of the new-*Eirin*, added a memorandum about points that required careful attention on September 30 (*Eiga Rinri Kitei* unpaginated). As a response to "The Memorandum," the *Eirin*'s regulation department created "The Specific Agreed-upon Items for the Examination Process," which listed some particular depictions the committee would problematize (*Eiga Rinri Kitei* unpaginated). In short, the creation of the new Motion Picture Code of Ethics was the work of two organizations: industry personnel from the *Eirin* Preservation Committee took charge of revising fundamental ethical guidelines, while the chairperson and the regulation department from the new-*Eirin* added "The Memorandum" and "The Specific Agreed-upon Items for the Examination Process" for practical purposes to emphasize what kind of depictions should be treated with care.

The enactment of the new Motion Picture Code of Ethics had significant implications for the depiction of homosexuality in Japanese cinema, since words such as homosexuality and gay boys were used in official ethical guidelines for the first time. As described in Chapter 1, the regulation of sexuality in the old Motion Picture Code of Ethics was considerably ambiguous as it merely said, "Do not depict activities based on

sexual deviancy or perverted sexual desire" (Eirin 186). Article 3 of Section 6 in the new version is not that different: "Do not depict obscene activities based on sexual deviancy or perverted sexual desire" (*Eiga Rinri Kitei* 9). Despite the fact that ambiguities are still present, what is meant by "perverted sexual desire" is made clearer in "The Specific Agreed-upon Items for the Examination Process." A supplement to Article 3 of Section 6 says, "Included are the treatments of homosexuality, the lifestyle of gay boys, perverse hobbies, and sadism among others" (*Eiga Rinri Kitei* 9). It is evident that this is an elaboration of the ethical guideline that only broadly described the regulation of sexual deviancy. Thus, when the Motion Picture Code of Ethics was newly formed, homosexuality and the gay boy became officially regarded by the *Eirin* as forms of perversion.

The *Eirin*'s official regulation holds great significance because it contributed to the filmic conceptualization of the gay boy. As a consequence of the diversification of Japan's sex industry after the banishment of *akasen* districts and media craze over gay bars, the gay boy became recognizable. That is, the image of gay boys was discursively established and gay boys became identifiable because of cultural codes that signified their gayness (their workplace, how they look and dress etc.). Because of the formation of the gay boy as a distinguishable concept, it was possible for it to become a target of regulation as a form of sexual perversion that should be handled with care.

How Homosexuality Can Be Talked About

The inclusion of the gay boy in the Motion Picture Code of Ethics did not simply mean an authoritative prohibition of homosexuality. A more crucial and ideological

implication was that the constitution and regulation of the gay boy were dependent on each other. As warned by Michel Foucault in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, power and sex should not be seen in negative terms where "power employs nothing more than a law of prohibition" (83–84). Rather, an authoritative power can actually have "a directly productive role" to constitute a discourse of knowledge about the sexuality it prohibits (Foucault 94). In the case of censorial regulations, imposed silence is not the absolute end of discourse production. As argued by Foucault,

> There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case. There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses. (27)

Censoring sexual perversion does not automatically mean total silence; it can take a productive role in generating and perpetuating the discourse that imposes the silence in the first place. Thus, the relationship between film and its regulation is a form of complicity. In Patricia White's words, film regulations are "a set of codes for producing meaning, and particularly sexual meaning, and indeed for producing readings" (8). In the name of the preservation of morality, films and its regulations performatively construct what can and cannot be said about homosexuality and how the (un)speakability can be cinematically expressed.

From this perspective, the increased visibility of gay boys resulted, not so much

in the stricter prohibition of gay images, as in the active construction of the way in which homosexuality could be talked about in Japanese films. It is rather difficult to tell how impactful the new Motion Picture Code of Ethics was in terms of practically regulating the depictions of the gay boy.[87] It is possible to hypothesize that the conceptualization of the gay boy, though ironically, actually led to its larger visibility, as more effeminate characters appeared in the 1960s. In any case, the significance lies in the fact that homosexuality came to be associated with a specific occupation, those who worked at gay bars. In short, the discursive construction of the gay boy image determined the manner in which the gay boy could be talked about.

The rest of the chapter analyzes selected Japanese films to explore the patterns in which the gay boy was discursively constructed to satisfy the desire of audiences. Regardless of whether they were treated comically or seriously, a representational strategy of the gay boy predominantly depended on emphases on their otherness and hiddenness, their state of being eccentric and dangerous, and, to that end, their involvement in criminal activities was particularly notable.[88] Although "crime films" are certainly an elusive term, here it broadly refers to a locally specific cycle of films which reacted to or took advantage of the abolishment of *akasen* districts and its consequence. This chapter, however, does not intend to establish such post-*akasen* films as a legitimate genre by identifying its conventions and continuities. Rather, by employing crime films as an approach to the gay boy, it explores what kind of desire the gay boy image meant to

[87] This is because the new-*Eirin* has not published any detailed documents regarding how regulative practices were operated. Their official documents "A Report by the Film Control Committee," published from 1957 to 1962, do not disclose which films are problematized for what reasons.
[88] Even in Nomura Yoshitarō's *Hanayome no onoroke* (*The Bride's Fond Talk of Love*, 1958), a romantic comedy with little reference to criminal activity, the otherness of gay boys is notable. The scene in which Hirose Takeo (Takahashi Teiji) and Abe Hideko (Okada Mariko) accidentally set foot in a gay bar is shot from a distance, generating a sense of detachment.

fulfill.

It is certainly true that the crime film is too large a category to define, as it encompasses many other labels and genres, such as thriller, film noir, and the detective film. According to Thomas Leitch, however, what lies at the center of crime films is the power dynamics between the different parties involved in crime cases. Leitch contends, "Crime films are about the continual breakdown and reestablishment of the borders among criminals, crime solvers, and victims. This paradox is at the heart of all crime films" (15). When it comes to film noir, it is often the case that the blurring of such boundaries has ideological implications. This is because "film noir is characterised by a certain anxiety over the existence and definition of masculinity and normality" (Dyer, "Resistance" 115). The uncertainty over the unfixed borderlines between right/wrong and male/female is not merely a thematic concern of crime films but "part of the mood, the noirness" (Dyer, *The Culture* 90). Through formal techniques, such as chiaroscuro lighting and canted framing, a sense of fluidity can be visually expressed. The thematic and stylistic concerns of crime films are precisely the negotiation of taken-for-granted notions of justice and masculinity, typically leading to reassuring endings in which the disturbed order is reestablished.

Such negotiations of morality, normality, and masculinity are at the heart of post-*akasen* crime films, which will be analyzed below. In them, there are mainly two ways in which gay boys are represented as side characters. The first way is rooted in exploitation, and treats gayness as an object of knowledge and perverted other of normalcy, like the gay boom in 1958. The second way employs gay boys as convenient devices to recount masculinity crises. The chapter demonstrates that, in both ways, the portrayal of the gay boy offers a temporary destabilization of traditional masculine norms and serves to bring

enjoyment to audiences, by analyzing representative films of the two ways: Ishii Teruo's *Kurosen chitai* (*Black Line*, 1960) and Suzuki Seijun's *Ankoku no ryoken* (*Passport to Darkness*, 1959).

The Economy of Transgression in *Kurosen Chitai*

Kurosen chitai is part of Shin-Tōhō's popular Line series, a thriller about a sex business that went underground after the ban of *akasen* districts. Ishii had already shown his interest in depicting the relationship between prostitution and organized crime in *Nyotai sanbashi* (*Flesh Pier*, 1958), which was serialized later.[89] The series includes films with similar narrative structures: *Shirosen himitsu chitai* (*Secret White Line Zone*, 1958), *Kurosen chitai*, *Ōsen chitai* (*Yellow Line*, 1960), and *Sexy chitai* (*Sexy Line*, 1961).[90] According to González-López's description of the series, "Showing the connections to international crime and drug contraband and abuse, in each film Ishii dynamically portrays the diversification of the prostitution industry and the imprint of its history" (109). Despite the fact the that the films were an urgent response to the system of prostitution after the ban of *akasen* districts, the films' stance to the diversified sex industry is exploitative.[91] It was not their concern to, for example, critically examine the situations of sex workers who were in financial difficulty, as other filmmakers had done in response to the enforcement of the Prostitution Prevention Law.[92] Instead, the ultimate

[89] According to Ishii, the ideas of both *Nyotai sanbashi* and the first installment of the Line series came from his producer Sagawa Akira (Ishii and Fukuma 84).
[90] *Kasen shitai* (*Fire Line*, 1961) could also be regarded as part of the Line series, but the film was only penned, not directed, by Ishii and does not deal with the issue of prostitution.
[91] It is not surprising that one of the contemporary reviews of *Shirosen himitsu chitai* criticized the ambiguity of the filmmaker's attitude towards prostitution (Tayama, "*Shirosen*" 74).
[92] These include Mizoguchi Kenji's *Akasen chitai* (*Street of Shame*, 1956), Kimura Keigo's *Yaneura no onna-tachi* (*Women in the Attic*, 1956), Kawashima Yūzō's *Suzaki paradise: Akashingō* (*Suzaki*

objective of the series was to depict underground adult-entertainment facilities, for example, through a glimpse of cabarets and Turkish baths. The reason why they could narratively justify the portrayal of these places was because the films utilized crime investigation as an excuse.

On a surface level, the Line series faithfully follows the conventions of the crime film. In the case of narrative structure, the serial continuity of Ishii's films is characterized by the crime film formula in which the line between the offenders and investigators is challenged. For instance, a hired assassin in *Ōsen chitai* who was betrayed by his employer, vows to investigate who caused the betrayal, for the sake of revenge. In another example, the protagonist of *Sexy chitai* is forced to investigate a crime because he is wrongfully accused of the murder of his girlfriend. Expressed through stylistic means that emphasize the contrast of light and shadow, the blurring of social mores, such as in business contracts or the justice system, is executed. This serves to test the masculine capability of the characters to solve the case and to restore the blurred boundaries. In any case, the endings offer resolutions which rearticulate the questioned boundaries, leading to (albeit temporarily) the revival of the social order.

Having said that, the charm of the Line series lies in its superficial application of this crime narrative convention. Although the film's narrative seems to stir anxiety in the audience, the point of the series is not to comfort them. Rather, it is to offer a visual guide to the post-*akasen* underground sex industry, which is creatively imagined by Ishii. Although the crime investigations in these films serve as a vehicle to reveal the impact of the prohibitive law, the emphasis of the films is to offer a spectacle so that audiences can

---

Paradise: Red Light, 1956), and Tanaka Shigeo's *Akasen no hi wa kiezu* (*Tainted Flowers*, 1958), among others.

engage with socially concealed and overlooked aspects of society.

The function of the gay boy was to satisfy the desire of viewers to peep at something transgressive in post-*akasen* Japan. As noted by Christine L. Marran, "the transgressive is an exoticized other that provides sustenance to the system and to the subject. The subject consumes the peripheral or the transgressive in order to feed and nourish the psychological self/subject" (xix). While consuming transgressive images inevitably reconstitute a "proper" subject, the gay boy in *Kurosen chitai* complicates this economy of transgression. This is because, for the viewers of exploitative B-movies that Shin-Tōhō is famous for, the allure of the transgressive outweighs the eventual constitution of the subject. The rest of this section focuses on the analysis of *Kurosen chitai* to elaborate on the limits and possibilities of consuming the transgressive in the film.[93]

The second installment of the Line series, *Kurosen chitai* has a conventional narrative formula of the wrongfully accused, in which tabloid reporter Machida Kōji (Amachi Shigeru) is framed for the murder of a prostitute and has no choice but to investigate the crime to prove his innocence. As the investigation progresses, a vicious control of prostitution and drug business by a criminal organization is uncovered. Machida's noir-like narration refers to this situation as *kurosen* (black line): the abusive use of illicit drugs to make sex workers addicted and obedient. In the process of investigating the *kurosen* prostitution ring, Machida encounters Maya (Mihara Yōko), an energetic woman in the drug business, with whom he forms a romantic bond. When the case is closed by the end of the film, Machida wins both his innocence and the woman's

[93] The following crime films in urban settings also include gay boys: Sugawa Eizō's *Yajū shisubeshi* (*The Beast Shall Die*, 1959), Ōsone Tatsuo's *Ōsaka yarō* (*Osaka Tough*, 1961), and *Ryōjin nikki*.

heart.

Despite the male-centered narrative, however, this literal reading can be challenged by the strong physicality and personality of Maya. As Machida and Maya are teamed up to solve the case, the contrast between them becomes obvious: the man embodies professionalism, whereas the woman is defined by her physicality. Machida's commitment to journalistic principles, motivated by his need to prove his innocence, is reflected by his sexual stoicism and superficial morality. In some scenes, prompted by his need to interview sex workers, Machida rejects their sexual advances, displaying a slight but noticeable moral judgment towards them. Being the protagonist of the film, Michida's role is to display superficial moralism while progressing the narrative. In the film, however, Machida's boring protagonism is overshadowed by Maya's strong presence, which takes advantage of Mihara's alluring physique. Her bodily expressions invite erotic attention as she dances half-naked and hides a key in her bra. The film's treatment of her physicality is unapologetically exploitative, as can be seen from a tilt shot that captures her half-naked body. The film overly takes advantage of Maya/Mihara's to-be-looked-at-ness, while Machida, whose narrative is sidetracked, is a mere mediator that allows the audience to be the bearer of the gaze.

The film's objective is to satisfy the desire of viewers to look, not only at the body of women, but also at transgressive underground adult-entertainment facilities, by using the protagonist as a vessel that guides the audience around post-*akasen* prostitution rings. *Kurosen chitai* introduces the audience to a number of shady places and individuals, imagined by the filmmaker, such as a navy-themed cabaret called "Singapore," a laundry owner who only washes women's undergarments, and a doll-making school that is secretly associated with human trafficking and the distribution of illegal drugs. Like the

close-up shot of a magnifying glass in the opening sequence that changes our perspective, the film scandalously distorts the images of a post-*akasen* reality like how tabloid journalism does.

A gay bar is one of the hidden attractions that the film offers as a visual spectacle. When the bar is introduced near the end of the film, both the filmmaker on a meta level and the gay boys of the bar on a diegetic level are conscious of the ways in which viewers can be entertained by gay performances. The scene begins with a medium close-up shot of a gay boy Kayoko (Asami Hiroshi) turning their back to the camera and starting to sing a chanson-like love song. As the medium close-up shot is cut to medium long, the camera captures Kayoko swishing their hips and enticing customers who welcome and applaud Kayoko's performance. After the show, Kayoko rushes to Machida and flirtatiously thanks him for specifically requesting for their service. At the table, Kayoko swiftly orders two glasses of brandy, discreetly sending a signal to fellow gay boys to join them later. The portrayal of gay bars in the film illustrates how these establishments function as places of adult entertainment, involving singing, flirting, and signaling. *Kurosen chitai* offers an imaginary tour to gay bars so that the audience can have a simulated experience.

In the non-normative location, Machida's roles were readily subdued. Due to Machida's roles as both a narrative and a moralistic agent of the film, his visit to the gay bar has two objectives: the investigation of Joe (a possible villain) and the moral condemnation of the gay boys. These objectives, however, are quickly disregarded or become a target of criticism for the gay boys. In a two shot of Machida and Kayoko, the journalist asks the whereabouts of Joe. Glancing aside and toying with a watch, the gay boy does not give out much information, replying, "I don't know." To change the subject of discussion, Kayoko then relies on seduction by touching Machida's body. Once two

other gay boys join them at the table, the investigation is transformed into moral condemnation as Machida inappropriately asks about their interest in "rehabilitation." What follows is severer critiques of Machida's character and behavior by the three gay boys, especially of the lack of knowledge about "cultural women" they identify with. At the gay bar, their presence is predominantly stronger than Machida, who fails to move the narrative forward and be a moral agent, leaving both objectives unachieved.

It is important to note, however, that the powerful presence of the gay boys is based on the exploitative nature of the Line series. Although the gay boys take an active role in challenging the male protagonist, they are merely exhibited as a spectacle for the viewers. That is, being challenged, dominated, and astonished by the transgressive are at the core of the pleasure-making of *Kurosen chitai*. While the film is indifferent to the restoration of social order or the subject, it also does not do enough to challenge the system of representation that exploits the gay boy.

The film is unique in that the reestablishment of a male subject is not an ultimate objective. As the conventions of crime films are not faithfully followed by the film and the importance of moral issues are taken over by desire, the film might seem like a celebratory acceptance of the transgressive. Yet the problem still remains since the possessor of the gaze is almost always distant viewers who are allowed to peep at unorthodox attractions. The film's exploitation is based on an unfair distribution of power without questioning where the locus of the power to write, film, and make a boom out of the gay boy is. In the end, unusual queer sites and people portrayed in the film serve only to allow viewers to consume the transgressive from a safe distance.

A Fantasy Scenario of *Ankoku no Ryoken*

Another consequence of the gay boy's public recognition is the increasing use of the gay boy as a device to allegorize Japan's subjugated status to the US by writers and filmmakers. In a popular post-war discourse, male-male sexual relationships were attributed to the Occupation, implying that it was the primary cause for the proliferation of homosexuality. For this reason, Japan's political passivity was symbolically represented through the gay boy's sexual relationship with another man. The textual analysis of *Ankoku no ryoken* would reveal the ways in which films with gay boys provide a fantasy scenario in which viewers can enjoy Japan's symptom of subjugation.

During the post-war years, it was commonly conceived that the American soldiers "brought" homosexuality as they occupied Japan. According to Tomita Eizō's contemporary account in 1958, for example, the initial usage of the term "gay" dates back to the immediate post-war period when the G.I., with the aim of making sexual advances, got the attention of cute Japanese boys by saying "Hey, you gay" (189). Here homosexual wooing is intertwined with the power dynamics between the seducer and the seduced, the occupier and the occupied. These discourses were prevalent during the gay boom as well, so much so that the gay boy had been described as "the occupying army's farewell gift" and "a trend the occupying army left behind" (Aikawa 204; Mukai 96). This discursive recognition of homosexuality indicates that "both the rapid increase in the discourses on homosexuality and an apparent rise in the incidence of homosexuality in general are identified as post-war phenomena" (Suganuma 60).[94]

[94] Katsuhiko Suganuma quickly adds, "However, […] the actual voices or narratives by those men themselves were largely unheard" (60–61).

When the discourse of homosexuality as a US import is scrutinized, the credibility of these accounts, that is, whether the American soldiers were actually responsible for the spread of homosexuality in Japan, should not be of great importance. Although such an idea is highly questionable, the formation of this conception was based on a *perception* of reality that cannot always be attributed to actual experiences or historical evidences. Rather, ideological significances lie in the sheer fact that homosexuality was perceived as such and the condition in which this idea was formulated and accepted.

Male same-sex relations, in that sense, were a convenient trope through which Japan could negotiate its own masculinity. One of the ways in which such negotiation took place was using a passive homosexual state as a symbol of Japan's defeat in World War II and the subsequent subjugation. Suganuma analyzes perverse magazines in the 1950s in this fashion and the discursive formation of *pan pan* boys, "Japanese men who exclusively fancy foreign men" (61). According to Suganuma, "Similar to the discourses on *pan pan* girls, *pan pan* boys become an object of criticism due to their symbolic status of subjugation to the occupying force — which poses a threat to national identity" (62).[95] Such use of homosexual relations can be seen in literary and cinematic works as narrative tropes. Notable works are Ōe Kenzaburō's *Warera no jidai* (*Our Generation*, 1957) and Mishima Yukio's *Nikutai no gakkō* (*School of the Flesh*, 1964), as well as their subsequent film adaptations.[96] Both the novels and film versions portray a male character who finds himself in a queer situation: Kō (Odaka Yūji) in *Warera no jidai* is unhappily partnered with an American soldier who he eventually kills, and Satō Senkichi (Yamazaki Tsutomu)

[95] Italics are in the original.
[96] Nikkatsu produced the film version of Ōe's *Warera no jidai*, whereas Tōhō took charge of adapting *Nikutai no gakkō* (*School of Sex*, 1965).

in *Nikutai no gakkō*, a gay boy who sleeps with both men and women for money, tries to escape his financial situation through the support of an older woman. Their struggles to escape from the situations, be it through murder or heterosexual coupling, can be interpreted as Japan's position in the global political sphere. Homosexuality was portrayed in a disdained manner as it functions as a scapegoat for Japan's feminized state.

Through the analysis of *Ankoku no ryoken*, this chapter contends that such cinematic treatment of the gay boys can offer a fantasy scenario that envisions Japan's successful escape from the subjugated position. Here fantasy refers to "a scenario filling out the empty space of a fundamental impossibility, a screen masking a void" (Žižek 141). The ideological role of fantasy is to generate a utopic vision of society that is unattainable in reality but believable enough to be embraced. It conceals, instead of opening a path to, the underlying symptom of social organization by offering a fantastical possibility that the utopian social order can somehow be achieved. In the case of the gay boy, their cinematic presence become "an outward positive cause whose elimination would enable us to restore order, stability and identity" (Žižek 144). Through the elimination of the gay boy, it is imagined that the feminized state can be resolved and lost masculinity can be regained. As a means to make this fantasy scenario believable and to conceal its impossibility, it has to be recounted and narrativized so that homosexual experiences can be felt like a symptom of post-war Japan.

Ankoku no ryoken is an early representative of such a fantasy scenario about the gay boy and Japan's masculine (im)possibility that utilizes crime film conventions to portray international organized crime in post-*akasen* Japan.[97] Based on Washio Saburō's

[97] As of August 2022, the limited availability of *Ankoku no ryoken* makes it difficult to watch. A special screening was possible thanks to the support of Alo Joekalda and the National Film Archive of Japan.

Jigoku no passport (*Passport to Hell*, 1958), it was an A-picture in a double bill that marked the twelfth directorial effort of Suzuki.[98] Despite the current cult status of Suzuki, the 1959 crime thriller was produced before his breakthrough year in 1963. It was only after 1963 that his pop experimentalism and playful alteration of genre films became increasingly noticeable.[99] Thus, *Ankoku no ryoken* should be regarded less as the auteur's idiosyncratic work than a studio movie, one of the Nikkatsu Noir films, and the continuous film adaptations of Washio's thrillers.[100] Like Shin-Tōhō's Line series, Nikkatsu Noir was a label for urban crime films that utilized a combination of on-site filming and studio sets, and used low-key lighting both as mood lighting for gritty subject matters and as a way of masking the cheapness and shallowness of the set designs (Carroll Ch. 3). The "gritty subject matter" *Ankoku no ryoken* unveils is none other than that of the gay boy. As the director himself homophobically addresses it as "an *okama* film," *Ankoku no ryoken* responds to (or takes advantage of) the gay boom and the increasing visibility of the gay boy (Suzuki et al. 73). In the form of crime investigation, gay boys are employed as allegorical figures that embody Japan's subjugation while the film depicts homosexual relationships as a symptom of Japanese masculinity.

The narrative structure of *Ankoku no ryoken* was designed to blur multiple boundaries. The plot centers on a pursuit of trombonist Ibuki Shigeo (Hayama Ryōji) whose wife Hiromi (Sawa Tamaki) goes missing on the train during their honeymoon trip and is later found dead in their apartment. Becoming a prime suspect of the murder of his

---

[98] The B-side of the double bill is *O-yae no migawari jochū* (*O-yae the Substitute Maid*, 1959) (Carroll Appendix 1).

[99] Tom Vick considers 1963 as Suzuki's breakthrough year due to the beginning of his collaboration with art director Kimura Takeo (39).

[100] Apart from *Ankoku no ryoken*, Washio's *Jigoku no kamigami* (*Gods of Hell*, 1957) and *Jigoku no wana* (*Hell's Trap*, 1958) were adapted into films by Nikkatsu, as *Rajo to kenjū* (*The Naked Woman and the Gun*, 1957) and *Jigoku no wana* (*Hell's Trap*, 1958), respectively.

own wife, Ibuki is determined to solve the case to prove his innocence and take revenge on the murderer. Ibuki's position of being both the crime solver and the accused is partly due to his failure to distinguish dreams from reality. Before the discovery of his wife's body, Ibuki, upset with her disappearance, went barhopping and got severely intoxicated. The scene is handled in a highly dreamy manner, with the superimposition of neon signs and shots with partial views, blurring the line between reality and illusion. His uncertainty about his own whereabouts on the night of the murder is the prime cause for his suspiciousness.

As the investigation progresses, gender and moral orders are overturned as well. Hoping to discover the whereabouts of Kenny, a key figure to solve the case, Ibuki goes to a gay bar named Chidori. In it, the protagonist engages in conversation with a gay boy who is portrayed with distinct characteristics such as feminine mannerisms and appearance, including a ring, thick eyeshadow, exaggerated body movements, and the use of women's language. Although temporarily, the scene exposes the constructedness of gender, drawing attention to the fact that the androgyny of the gay boy cannot be simply attributed to conventional masculinity and femininity. Spotting suspicious model Ōtsuki Kayoko (Tsukuba Hisako) during the conversation with the gay boy, Ibuki follows her to the room at the back of the bar. A medium-long shot captures Ōtsuki's fanatical search of drugs as she severely messes up the room while feathers from a broken pillow drift around. Her voice is suddenly transformed into something deep and devilish, expressing a monstrous state of the drug user suffering from withdrawal. The disturbing depiction of drug issues can be contextualized in post-*akasen* Japan where the diversified sex industry after the ban was connected to drug businesses.[101] Through narrating the crime-solving

[101] The original novel does portray the use of drugs and drug businesses, but the depiction of drug

mystery, *Ankoku no ryoken* questions fundamental concepts in the world we think we know – justice, reality, masculinity, and sanity – which are not as orderly as we want to believe.

In the end, these fundamental concepts are questioned because of the mother of all problems, gay boy Kenny (Kenny Aoki).[102] Also known by their birthname Kōji, Kenny is Hiromi's younger brother who had been missing after moving to Tokyo from Hokkaido. Despite Ibuki's earnest attempt to find Kenny, however, the film deliberately delays their meeting which can be interpreted as a way to emphasize the hidden status of the gay boy. Short-haired with curly eyebrows, Kenny's face is finally disclosed in the latter half of the film at a bar named Tsubo. When the gay boy is playing with dice, Ibuki suddenly comes in and asks the bartender about the whereabouts of Kenny. As the bartender feigns ignorance, Kenny hides under their jacket. Then enters Ishimaru (Kondō Hiroshi), a suspicious producer in the entertainment industry. During Ishimaru (positioned at the right side of the frame) and Ibuki's (center) conversation at the counter, Kenny (framed on the left side) cannot be seen because the bartender blocks the audience's view. Even when Ibuki and Ishimaru move to the table at the back, Kenny's frightened face remains only at the right end of the frame, until the gay boy hastily leaves the frame as well as the bar. In this sequence, the meticulous framing is designed to strategically highlight, not only Kenny's internal desire to remain hidden, but also the symbolic covertness of the issues surrounding the case itself. In other words, Kenny's hidden status is exactly the symptom that needs to be uncovered and yet remains unseen.

A deep-rooted issue behind the murder is finally unveiled when a homosexual

users is not as horrifying as the film.

[102] Featured in a magazine article during the gay boom, Kenny Aoki is most likely a gay boy ("Gay Boy" 257). A short account of (most likely) Kenny's life can be found in Tomita's *Gay* (97–114).

relationship between Kenny and Frank (D.G. Waller) is exposed. Frank, a primary villain in *Ankoku no ryoken*, is the French leader of an international criminal syndicate, which main business interest is drug trafficking. Frank's control over the distribution of drugs allows him to make Kenny addicted for the sake of keeping him as an obedient lover. More than anything, Frank is responsible for the murder of Hiromi who knew too much about their relationship.

Frank's authoritative presence is closely associated with his stronger position in sexual and political relationships. The sexual dynamics between Frank and Kenny can be characterized by Frank's physical attachment to Kenny. Their physical intimacy is mostly depicted in an unnerving manner: it is rumored that they take baths together for hours and Frank forcefully kisses Kenny upon reuniting with them. Especially notable is a scene that takes place at Frank's villa: ignoring Kenny's resentment of him for the killing of Hiromi, Frank, while hugging Kenny, orders the gay boy to run away to Hong Kong with him. This shot of the hug is indicative of their power dynamics: Kenny's state of entrapment and the possibility of semipermanent subjugation are expressed through the control of Kenny's body. The criminality and sexual aggression of Frank, however, remain to be unpunishable even for the protagonist. Ibuki and a narcotics officer barge into the villa only to find out that Frank is unarrestable. As Frank describes how he left no trace of evidence, the camera rapidly and physically gets closer to his face, exaggerating his power. Frank is too powerful a figure for Japan to get away from and to impose appropriate sanctions.

As a solution to this situation, *Ankoku no ryoken* offers a rather grim ending. A final showdown takes place at the airport, where Ibuki can do nothing but watch Frank leave for Hong Kong with Kenny. On their way to board the airplane, a gunshot suddenly

sounds and Frank collapses. The camera tilts up from their gun-holding hand to the face of Kenny, who says, "I have been meaning to do this someday." Before the closure of the film, the only thing Ibuki can do is to play a melancholic song on the trombone, lamenting the deaths and Japan's holes in national security.

Referring to multiple social issues in post-war Japan, the ideological implications of *Ankoku no ryoken* are more complex than they actually seem. On the one hand, the film is a valid social critique of the prevalence of illicit drugs that enslave people's bodies and minds in post-*akasen* Japan. National incapability to cope with the issue is metaphorically displaced onto the body of Kenny, whose uneven sexual partnership with Frank symbolizes Japan's passivity. Despite making a story out of the gay boy's struggle, the film presents homosexuality not as a sexuality but an allegory that represents Japan's feminized status. Thus, it should be no surprise that what the film implies is that Japan should escape from the position of being dominated, that is, that Japan should recuperate from being a passive gay boy.[103] After all, in the end, it is Kenny's self-destructive resistance to their abusive foreign sugar daddy that brings closure to the murder case. In short, *Ankoku no ryoken*'s social critique revolves around the idea that Japan needs to overcome its passivity.

On the other hand, the fantasy scenario serves an ideological function by presenting the escape from the feminized state as a viable possibility. As seen in Watanabe Takenobu's theory about Nikkatsu Action films of the mid-1950s to the early 1970s, the inherent motivation of the films is a longing for utopia, where people can construct autonomous selves (*Nikkatsu* 16–20). In the case of *Ankoku no ryoken*, the gloom-ridden ending laments the failure to achieve the formation of autonomous selves. The pessimism

[103] The original novel more clearly endorses Kenny's "return" to manliness (Washio 226).

makes the construction of a masculine utopia imaginable by making it essential for Japan to break free from its feminized position to form a stronger self. To make this kind of fantastical solution probable and desirable, the gay boy needs to be sympathetic and identifiable to the extent that their engagement in homosexual relationships can be viewed as a symptom of Japan's feminized state. Viewers' identification with the gay boy and the gay boy's eventual elimination are tied together to offer an imaginary solution that is vectored towards producing a desire to regain masculinity that has been lost. The construction of the gay boy image provided viewers a convenient other which allowed them to enjoy Japan's symptom of subjugation on screen as a form of fantasy.

Conclusion

The conceptualization of the gay boy as a recognizable image made it possible for Japanese cinema to fulfill different kinds of desire held by viewers. This is the result of multiple sociopolitical transformations in Japan during the late 1950s, such as the prohibition of *akasen* districts, the 1958 gay boom, and the revision of the Motion Picture Code of Ethics. The increasing visibility of gay boys led to the discursive formation of who they are and how they can be depicted in Japanese cinema. Undertaking an image of prohibited desire, the gay boy became especially noticeable in crime-related films as a means to satisfy multiple kinds of desire, be it the desire to consume the transgressive in *Kurosen chitai* or the desire to regain masculinity in *Ankoku no ryoken*. The gay boy in Japanese cinema is an integral part of the cinematic system of pleasure distribution, allowing viewers to negotiate with masculine norms.

Although the depiction of the gay boy was largely based on prejudice and

stereotypes, the development of the gay image was not unrelated to the social formation of queer culture. Like Kenny Aoki in *Ankoku no ryoken*, real-life queer people who identified as gay boys played active roles in the image formation of the gay boy. The implication of queer agency – whether their participation produced any kind of resistance or a different form of conceptualization from the existing image of the gay boy – is a vital topic that requires future investigation.

Connections between gay bars in reality and the gay boy on screen still existed even after the gay boom, but effeminate characters came to be diversified in the 1960s, producing something uniquely cinematic that was dissociated from social phenomena. The presence of effeminate characters in homosocial communities, particularly in masculine-obsessed groups of yakuza, started to become increasingly observable from the mid-1960s, which is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 5

The Yakuza:

The Eroticization of Male Bodies

Yukaina nakama (*Cheerful Company*, 1962) is a morality tale which illustrates the chivalrous spirit of Zentarō (Shindō Eitarō), a middle-aged outlaw who repeatedly commits crimes to stay in prison. The film revolves around Zentarō and his buddies' sincere efforts to do social service and fight back against a malicious politician who only works for his own benefit. The point of the film is that, despite multiple criminal records, the yakuza with a heart of gold knows more than self-obsessed people in power about what is right and wrong. Strangely enough, one of Zentarō's buddies in the prison is an effeminate character, credited as gay boy Kaoru (Yanagisawa Shin'ichi), who expresses a strong desire to be penetrated from behind. However, Kaoru's constant sexual advances to their buddies, which are consistently rejected, do not disrupt the friendships among the prisoners. Despite the fact that they are depicted in a stigmatized and lewd manner, Kaoru is still an integral part of the homosocial community of the outlaws with high morals.

Yukaina nakama is only one example of the many yakuza films in which effeminate characters appear in the 1960s. This fact then raises a question of how characters with homosexual desire could exist in male-dominated communities. After all, homosexuality is a threat to friendship between men because it denaturalizes the heterosexual basis of relationships. To neutralize this threat, "The homoeroticism which develops between close friends is displaced onto the abject other of the stigmatized homosexual and also sublimated into desire for the woman" (Richardson 20). It is

possible to understand that the dehumanized representation of Kaoru is the abject other to dismiss the presence of homoeroticism between the men. Having said that, Kaoru's repetitious sexual advances seem to emphasize the homoeroticism between the men more than they repress it. While Kaoru's body is rejected continuously, their desire towards male bodies keeps coming back. If so, what kind of role does a strong possessor of homoerotic desire play in a homosocial community?

This chapter focuses on the yakuza film, especially the *Akumyō* (*Bad Reputation*) series (1961-1969) and the *Abashiri bangai-chi* (*Abashiri Prison*) series (1965-1967), to examine the eroticization of male bodies by effeminate characters. It first provides an explanation of the background of the early 1960s Japan where action-oriented films emerged against the backdrop of the country's renegotiation of its position in the global geopolitical sphere. It is followed by an examination of the popularity of the yakuza film during the period, which imagined Japan as an active agent in history through the promotion of traditional values and masculinity. Through textual analyses of the *Akumyō* and *Abashiri bangai-chi* series, this chapter demonstrates how the inclusion of effeminate characters in yakuza films has the critical potential to play with homosocial desire that is present when people consume such films featuring male bodies.

The Masculinization of Japanese Cinema

The 1960s saw the negotiation of Japan's national identity. As the economy of Japan recovered, the post-war democratic order was seen in a suspicious light and questions about the role of Japan in the global sphere arose. The turbulent decade started with massive demonstrations against the renewal of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation

and Security Between the United States and Japan, known as the *Anpo*, in 1960. The protest was motivated by public outrage over the treaty and the hypocritical nature of the post-war system. The post-war social structure, called "peace and democracy," was founded on imperialistic ideology in which Japan had to provide the US military with economic support (Muto and Inoue 29). The anti-treaty movement was a reaction to the hypocrisy of "peace and democracy" and offered people an opportunity to question the political alliance between Japan and the US. After the renewal of the treaty and the subsequent resignation of Kishi Nobusuke, the newborn administration led by Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato proposed the Income Doubling Plan, a populist policy which promised to double people's incomes in ten years. Japan's economy, which saw slow growth in the late 1950s, recovered quickly in the 1960s and embraced financial prosperity in the subsequent decades. Being an ordinary white-collar worker became a common career choice for most Japanese people, while some continued their political activities throughout the 1960s. The demonstrations and the economic boom are two seemingly contrasting but fundamentally related forces that characterize the 1960s. As the country became richer and "stronger," Japan's subjugation to the US is started to be scrutinized.

These socio-political backgrounds influenced the landscape of Japan's cultural production. The cultural industry reacted to mass consumerism and the questioned national identity in a way that "the defense of male identity was a central concern of the critical imagination" (Igarashi, *Japan* 6). In the case of the film industry, one of the changes that took place was the sudden influx of individualistic male heroes. According to Satō Tadao, what characterizes Japanese cinema in the 1960s is the prosperity of male action heroes and the decline of romantic leads ("*Otokotachi"* 109). A number of young

male stars, including Ishihara Shintarō, Kobayashi Akira, Ichikawa Raizō, and Takakura Ken, among others, emerged and starred in their own popular series, featuring action-driven stories. In these action-oriented films, the heroes served as active agents who are capable of taking action and solving problems.

The masculinization of Japanese cinema in the 1960s is ideologically significant in that it helped redefine how Japanese people saw themselves, as being in control of their own history. This is in contrast with popular melodramatic narratives produced in the immediate post-war period. According to Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, Japanese melodrama functioned as "a narrativization of specific types of socio-political contradictions induced by the modernization process" (*Logic* 30). Local reactions to modernity can be found in melodramatic films and the concern of post-war melodrama was "to negate the ultimate failure of Japanese modernity, which in the end brought Japan to rubble as a result of imperialist adventurism" (Yoshimoto, *Logic* 42). The emergence of melodramatic films is ideologically significant because they produced the victim consciousness of Japanese people. Yoshimoto argues,

> To the extent that it feeds on their awareness of the lack of a Western style subjectivity in Japan, the melodramatic constantly reminds the Japanese that Japan is trapped in the geopolitical space of the Western hegemony. It is partly to facilitate the escape from this position of the "slave" that melodrama clears the space for the subject who does not act but only is acted upon; that is, the Japanese have negatively constructed a subject position from which they can fall into a delusion of being innocent victims of evil doings by others. ("Melodrama" 108)

The victim consciousness found in the post-war melodramatic films allowed Japanese people to take a subject position to blame Japan's failure to modernize on the nation's lack of subjectivity, compared to Western countries.

The question is how to understand the melodramatic during the economic boom, the disparity between an idealized modernity and the actual process of modernization. Yoshimoto argues that the melodramatic only became unconscious: "Japan's high-growth economy and the development of postindustrial capitalism have created the illusion that the fundamental disparity between modernity and modernization experienced by non-Western countries is finally sublated" ("Melodrama" 119). If that is the case, the masculinization of Japanese cinema served as an alternative means to express the melodramatic by offering an imaginary solution to the disparity: that is, a male hero creates an illusion of the formation of subjectivity after Japan's defeat in World War II.

Japanese filmgoers embraced strong male subjects who magically solved the conflict of modernization on screen and overcame Japan's feminized state after the defeat. One of the heroes who could perform these kinds of near-impossible tasks was none other than the yakuza.

The Yakuza Film and Homosocial Desire

The resurgence of the yakuza film in the 1960s provides an exemplary case of the articulation and resolution of the disparity between modernity and modernization. While these films supported conservative ideologies, their obsession with masculinity also presents a subversive potential for the genre because of the presence of homosocial

desire between men. Drawing on relevant literature, this section explores the possibility of challenging dominant notions of masculinity in the yakuza film.

The sudden boom of the yakuza film was initiated by Tōei's release of *Jinsei gekijō: Hishakaku* (*Theater of Life: Hishakaku*, 1963), which recounts a love-triangle between two members of the yakuza. The success of *Jinsei gekijō: hishakaku* attracted the fervent attention of Shundō Kōji, a Tōei producer, and encouraged him to produce his own version of the yakuza film, which is now commonly called *ninkyō eiga* (Shundō and Yamane 67). From 1964, Tōei produced a vast amount of *ninkyō eiga* under the direction of Shundō and serialized popular titles that starred famous actors.[104] Other studios followed along with the popularity of *ninkyō eiga* and also developed their own series, among which Nikkatsu's *Otoko no monshō* (*The Symbol of a Man*) series (1963-1966, ten installments) was a noteworthy example. Propelled by Tōei's reinvention of the genre, the yakuza film dominated Japanese cinemas for the next decade.

Tōei's *ninkyō eiga* is unique in that it challenges a historical boundary of the yakuza genre. In a seminal work on a history of the yakuza film, Keiko Iwai McDonald associates Japan's cultural history of literature and oral tradition to the original development of the film genre (167). Thus, McDonald's analysis of early yakuza films centers on the *jidaigeki* cinematization of widely-known chivalrous heroes, such as Kunisada Chūji and Shimizu Jirōchō. In McDonald's historical account, early yakuza films offer a nostalgic longing for the Japanese past when chivalrous heroes could serve as moral compasses. It was only in the 1960s that *ninkyō eiga* radically reinvented the

[104] Major serialized productions include the *Bakuto* (*Gambler*) series (1964-1971, ten installments), the *Nihon kyōkyaku-den* (*Tales of Chivalry in Japan*) series (1964-1971, eleven installments), the *Shōwa zankyō-den* (*Brutal Tales of Chivalry* series (1965-1972, nine installments), the *Kyōdai jingi* (*Duty of Brotherhood*) series (1966-1970, eight installments), the *Hibotan bakuto* (*Red Peony Gambler*) series (1968-1972, eight installments), and the *Gokudō* (*Outcast*) series (1968-1974, eleven installments).

genre. According to McDonald, "This new formula updated the setting, bringing it out of the feudal period into a distinctly modern era" (174). The relocation of the yakuza film to a modern setting set *ninkyō eiga* apart from older films in the genre.

This does not mean that no yakuza appeared in non-*jidaigeki* films before *ninkyō eiga*. After McDonald's historical account, other critics credited more films for the development of the yakuza film. Elayne Chaplin, for example, regards Ozu Yasujirō's *Hijōsen no onna* (*Dragnet Girl*, 1933) as "[a] contrasting representation of the Japanese gangster," which is more of "a generic hybrid of gangster movie and romantic melodrama" than a *jidaigeki*-oriented Chūji film (358). As another example, Mark Schilling's historical overview refers to Nikkatsu's *mukokuseki* (borderless) action films, Suzuki Seijun's B-movies, and Tōei's gang series as examples of the yakuza genre (22–32). Generally speaking, what these films have in common is an unashamed appreciation for Hollywood genre films, especially the Western and the gangster film. In short, the traditional yakuza image is complicated by borderless gangsters who refuse to be restricted by national boundaries.

One problem of Chaplin and Schilling's historical overviews is the interchangeable employment of the words, yakuza and gangster. Is the yakuza essentially the same as gangsters? Are there not any differences between the yakuza film and Japan's gangster films?

The difference between the two genres should be clearly articulated as they serve different ideological roles. The dichotomy of the yakuza and gangsters can be readily replaced with a bigger dichotomy of Japanese cinema. *Jidaigeki* and *gendaigeki* were the two mega-genres of Japanese films: the distinction between them solely depended on the period setting, that is, if they were set before or after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. These

genres played a significant ideological role in the construction of Japan as a modern nation-state. As Yoshimoto argues, "By instituting the major distinction between *jidaigeki* and *gendaigeki*, Japanese cinema contributed to the ideological imperative of imagining the absolute point of historical disjunction, which was essential for the Japanese national formation" (*Kurosawa* 209–210). The yakuza/gangster film during the studio era had a similar function. While the yakuza film, in a bid to establish a distinctly Japanese culture, confined itself to a pre-modern setting and developed a chivalrous spirit, Japanese gangster films imitated their Hollywood counterparts so that viewers could believe that Japan was sufficiently Westernized. The distinction between the yakuza and gangsters is essential as their ideological projects are utterly different.

The uniqueness of *ninkyō eiga* lies in how they complicate the boundary between *jidaigeki* and *gendaigeki*. Theoretically speaking, there is no question that *ninkyō eiga* is *gendaigeki* as they are set after the Meiji Restoration, mostly from the late Meiji period to the early Shōwa era. However, *ninkyō eiga* shares a genealogical similarity with early yakuza films: they portray a chivalrous tale with heroic yakuza who fight for a good cause. Despite its relocation of the yakuza film to a modern setting, *ninkyō eiga* still holds on to an ideological concern of the parent genre, that is, to articulate the cultural singularity of the nation.

In film studies scholarship, it has been argued that *ninkyō eiga* revives traditional chivalry in the modern age to resist an inevitable force of modernity. On a narrative level, there is a clear distinction between good and bad. Although many *ninkyō eiga* films were produced, they are "virtually indistinguishable" (Schrader 13) as the same narrative pattern was endlessly repeated. The good yakuza is in business conflict with the money-hungry bad yakuza that does whatever it takes to beat its opponent. Despite many

disturbances and attacks by the bad yakuza, the good yakuza respects communal rules and represses their impulse to fight back, until their buddy and/or the boss is/are ruthlessly murdered. The protagonist from the good clan finally makes up his mind and goes on a raid alone, although sometimes accompanied by his buddy. He successfully kills the evildoers, but because of his unlawful act, either gets arrested or needs to leave the town. The distinction between good and bad is replaceable with another contrast between tradition and modernity. As argued by McDonald, "The good yakuza still follow a traditional occupation as gamblers allied with established, 'old' businessmen with strong ties to the locale. The evil yakuza are a thoroughly modern type" (178–179). The alignment of morality and tradition serves to uphold the Japanese past when the nation was not tainted by the encroachment of capitalism.

This is also evident on a visual level. The good yakuza is in harmony with traditional possessions such as a *happi* (a Japanese cloak), *katana* (a sword), and *wa-shitsu* (a Japanese-style room), whereas the bad yakuza is associated with Western imports, like suits and guns. Through an analysis of these visual signs, Isolde Standish argues, "These films uphold nostalgia-based values in contemporary society through a ritualized social conflict resolved through violence" (*Myth* 166). The visual signs imply that *ninkyō eiga*'s narrative does not merely recount a communal dispute but a larger socio-political confrontation with Western hegemony.

The narrativization of the yakuza's rebellion against modernity turns the victim consciousness the other way round. Borrowing a formula of *gamangeki* (endurance play), *ninkyō eiga* fabricates an image of good yakuza as passive victims.[105] Despite their

[105] The most widely recognized *gamangeki* is *Chūshingura*, which recounts a story of forty-seven samurai awaiting their chance to vindicate their master. What makes it dramatic is the significant amount of time the warriors have to wait, during which they are humiliated by the public. The similarity between the narrative structures of *ninkyō eiga* and *Chūshingura* is no coincidence.

outlaw status due to unfortunate circumstances, good yakuza are essentially good people, in harmony with the local community. Yet, they suffer from massive industrial changes, represented by the evil yakuza. However, the victim consciousness of the good yakuza is overturned by their willingness to rebel and die for a good cause. The yakuza is capable of obstructing industrial changes and the only thing that stops them is their *giri*-bound relationship to their boss or the community. Instead of creating an idealized image of modernization as the ultimate solution for Japan's melodramatic disparity, *ninkyō eiga* proposes an alternative approach to address this: to find subjectivity in Japan's past. In the 1960s when Japan's political subjugation to the US was questioned, the yakuza film offered an illusion that Japan was and can be a fully autonomous nation.

While the yakuza film in the 1960s offered a masculine fantasy that solved the melodramatic disparity of post-war Japan, *ninkyō eiga* is not just about simply upholding the values of masculinity and chivalry.[106] Rather, its strong obsession with masculinity invites a deeper reading of the genre in which homoerotic sentiments can be found. A notable example is *michi-yuki*, a type of scene in which a member of the yakuza and his buddy walk to the headquarters of bad yakuza for a raid. Accompanied by sentimental music, the male bonding is highly aestheticized by atmospheric lighting and expressionist *mise-en-scène*. The sequence is certainly sensual, to the extent that Satō observes "an expression of homosexuality" ("Eiga" 56).[107] Contested in academic discourses is whether intimate bonds in homosocial yakuza communities can be read in an erotic light.

Kasahara Kazuo, a screenwriter of many yakuza films, prepared the plot for the first installment of the *Nihon kyōkyaku-den* series (1964), based on *Chūshingura* (38–39).

[106] Another strand of research that questions the dominance of masculinity in the yakuza film is the analysis of women who fight, especially Oryū (Fuji Junko) in the *Hibotan bakuto* series, who decides to live as a man in order to wreak vengeance on those who killed her father. For details, see Saitō ("Hibotan"), Coates, and Treglia.

[107] *Michi-yuki* originates from the Kabuki's style of *shinjū-mono* (plays about double suicides), in which lovers' journeys to death are aestheticized (Satō, *Nihon* 52).

In recently published articles, however, analytical focus is on the disavowal and prohibition, and not the emergence, of desire among men. In Standish's analysis, *ninkyō eiga*'s formulaic narrative "carries the ultimate juridical sanction, the death of one of the lovers and incarceration of the other" as a means to supplement traditional Neo-Confucian institutional structures ("Genre" 387–388). In a similar fashion, Yoshikuni Igarashi argues that erotic feelings are sacrificed "in order to keep their homosocial brotherhood intact" (*Japan* 181–182). For these scholars, the homoerotic desire of the yakuza is destined to be negated for the sake of sustaining the communal order.

Standish and Igarashi's straightforward readings of desire between men in *ninkyō eiga* are too simplistic to theorize how homosocial desire works. Their analytical focus is solely on the eventual disavowal of desire, but not on the surfacing of desire before it is negated. Here it is important to remind ourselves of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's effort to "draw the 'homosocial' back into the orbit of 'desire'" (*Between Men* 1). In her theorization of desire among men, Sedgwick conceptualizes the equivocality of homosocial desire, which both connects *and* jeopardizes men. Historically, homoerotic intimacy functioned as fuel to strengthen male bonding and constitute a patriarchal social system in Ancient Greece and feudal Japan, for example. In Sedgwick's words, there was a continuum between "'men loving men' and 'men promoting the interests of men'" (*Between Men* 4). The discharge of the semen of an older man into the body of an adolescent boy (*shudō*) was a symbolic bestowal of patriarchal power. In the process of modernization and the development of sexology, however, a category of homosexuality was established, which was deemed to be pathological. In Japanese society, for instance, where same-sex sexual acts (called *nanshoku*) were commonly practiced by samurai and monks respectively, modernization "led inevitably to the appearance of the 'sexual

pervert,' with 'sexual perversion' at the core of the individual's identity" (Furukawa 120). As a result of modernization, same-sex sexual acts between men, previously viewed as mere acts, came to be seen as a sign of homosexual identity. While homosexuality became considered as a pathological condition, cultural images of *nanshoku* survived especially in relation to "its idea of beauty" (Furukawa 121). This double standard, which regards homosexuality as a pathological condition while also perceiving it as a source of beauty, gives rise to a modern contradiction surrounding homosocial desire: while there exists homoeroticism in male bonding, any expression of homosexual desire must be suppressed. In Sedgwick's words, "For a man to be a man's man is separated only by an invisible, carefully blurred, always-already-crossed line from being 'interested in men.' Those terms, those congruences are by now endemic and perhaps ineradicable in our culture" (*Between Men* 89). Sedgwick's work is significant because it uncovers that, for its own sustainment, male bonding requires the presence of a type of desire that is threatening at the same time.

The yakuza film is a textbook example of how homosocial desire works in a male-centered community. Drawing on Sedgwick's theory, Saitō Ayako analyzes the presence of both the negation and emergence of homoerotic sentiments in *ninkyō eiga*. In Saitō's analysis, the male bond among the yakuza is unfixed because it is unstably balanced on the border between the homoerotic and the homosexual ("Takakura" 67). *Ninkyō eiga* takes disavowal as a representational strategy, by which the bond among the yakuza is sensually expressed but any sexual intimacy between the men is rejected. In spite of the prohibition of the homoerotic, violence substitutes a bursting release of restrained sexuality. Saitō finds the presence of "the visibility of repressed homosexuality" in the final raid scenes of the *Shōwa zankyō-den* series in which the libido of a half-naked

Takakura is released through exaggerated violence, followed by a romantic moment of the protagonist holding the deceased body of his buddy ("Takakura" 107). In the end, *ninkyō eiga* is faced with the inherent contradiction that male intimacy must be silenced, but at the same time the repressed sexual energy of the yakuza has to be released in some way. The homoerotic quickly subsided by the end of the film, but the desire was visually there on screen, and was certainly not simply negated.

Saitō's compelling examination of the genre's interplay of homosocial desire leaves room for further elaboration on the eroticism between men: that is, how actual homosexual depictions work in the homosocial paradigm. In the genealogy of the yakuza film, it is not rare to see apparent expressions of homosexual interest among men.[108] In particular, effeminate characters within male-dominated communities are frequently characterized with powerful homosexual energy, to the extent that some aggressively try to grope male bodies for sexual pleasure. As this comedic routine is a recurring trait in the yakuza film, the eroticization of male bodies seems to be accepted, or even welcomed, rather than treated as a threat to be eliminated. Thus, the yakuza film's extreme presentation of homosocial desire cannot be fully explained through the application of

[108] Tōei's yakuza films are filled with homosexual expressions and effeminate characters. Other than the films analyzed in this chapter, examples include *Kangoku bakuto* (*Prison Gambler*, 1964), *Gokuchū no kaoyaku* (*Boss in a Jail*, 1968), *Furyō banchō: Okuri o'okami* (*Delinquent Boss: Escort Wolf*, 1969), *Shin Abashiri bangai-chi: Runin-misaki no kettō* (*New Abashiri Prison: Harbor Duel*, 1969), *Shin Abashiri bangai-chi: Saihate no nagare-mono* (*New Abashiri Prison: The Vagrant Comes to a Port Town*, 1969), *Furyō banchō: Ōtehisha* (*Delinquent Boss: Checkmate*, 1970), *Kangoku ninbetsuchō* (*Prisoners' Black List*, 1970), *Sutemi no narazu-mono* (*A Hoodlum at the Risk of His Life*, 1970), *Shin Abashiri bangai-chi: Dai shinrin no kettō* (*New Abashiri Prison: Duel in the Forest*, 1970), *Shin Abashiri bangai-chi: Fubuki no hagure ōkami* (*New Abashiri Prison: A Wolf in the Blizzard*, 1970), *Yakuza deka* (*Yakuza Cop*, 1970), *Yakuza deka: Marijuana mitsubai soshiki* (*Yakuza Cop: Marijuana Gang*, 1970), *Shin Abashiri bangai-chi: Fubuki no dai-dassō* (*New Abashiri Prison: Escape in the Blizzard*, 1971), and *Shin Abashiri bangai-chi: Arashi yobu danpu jingi* (*New Abashiri Prison: Honor and Humanity, Ammunition That Attracts the Storm*, 1972). Effeminate characters are also part of a homosocial community in non-Tōei films, including *Otoko tai otoko* (*Man against Man*, 1960) by Tōhō and *Ahendaichi: Jigokubutai totsugekseyo* (*Purgatory Force: Assault Case*, 1966) by Shōchiku.

Sedgwick's work.

This chapter delves deeper into the possibility of the yakuza film as a genre that knowingly plays with the homosocial desire between men. It is often the case that the objectification of male bodies on screen is unacknowledged or motivated by something other than explicit eroticism (Neale 14–15). However, the yakuza film is often self-aware of the presence of the homoerotic gaze in homosocial communities. Particularly, the inclusion of effeminate characters with homosexual interest in the yakuza film makes it possible for the films to play with the unspeakability of homoeroticism. The subsequent analyses of the *Akumyō* and *Abashiri bangai-chi* series demonstrate how effeminacy creates an opportunity for self-reflection in the yakuza film.

Contrasting Desires in the *Akumyō* Series

Produced from 1961 to 1969, *Akumyō* is a film series with fifteen installments in which two outlaws, Asakichi (Katsu Shintarō) and Sada/Seiji (Tamiya Jirō), save an innocent citizen from the evil yakuza.[109] Released before the production of *ninkyō eiga*, the Daiei's popular series is a precursor to Tōei's yakuza subgenre, with the genre's components already perceivable. Especially noticeable is the coexistence of two contrasting desires between men. The first one is the patriarchal homosocial desire of Asakichi and Sada/Seiji towards each other, supported by a nationalistic narrative structure that serves to rewrite the history of Japan's modernization. The second one is effeminate character Ogin's (Chagawa Ichirō) homosexual desire to sexualize Asakichi's

[109] In 1974, Masumura Yasuzō remade the first and second installments and released *Akumyō: Shima arashi* (*Bad Reputation: Turf Wars*).

body. In order to reconcile these contrasting desires, Ogin assumes two distinct roles. First, they highlight the homoeroticism through their sexualization of male bodies. Second, they act as a decoy by performing femininity, allowing the desire between Asakichi and Sada/Seiji to remain discreet and avoid condemnation for being homosexual. Thus, Ogin symbolizes the paradoxical nature of homosocial desire, in which the acknowledgment and rejection of homoeroticism are intertwined.

Before the main discussion, this section will first briefly go over the serial development of *Akumyō*. The first and second installments, *Akumyō* (*Bad Reputation*, 1961) and *Zoku akumyō* (*Another Bad Reputation Story*, 1961), are film adaptations, based on Kon Tōkō's novel. Although the second installment was planned to be the final installment, the series continued due to its massive popularity. Because the serialization of *Akumyō* in the newspaper had ended, screenwriter Yoda Yoshikata developed an original story inspired by the same material.[110] This background of production indicates a serial disjunction between the first two installments and what came after. In particular, there are two notable differences. First, due to the death of Sada in *Zoku akumyō*, Seiji, his younger brother, becomes Asakichi's partner in the series that follows. Sada and Seiji have similar characteristics: they are both modern and carefree. However, the difference between Asakichi and Seiji is clearer than that of Asakichi and Sada. Second, the narrative structure became more episodic after the second installment. Unlike the first two films which had more room for character development, the installments that followed had complete stories in which Asakichi and Seiji solve problems for the weak. The following analysis focuses on the third installment *Shin akumyō* (*New Bad Reputation*, 1962) and

[110] Yoshikata penned the scripts for the whole series, except the ninth installment *Akumyō taiko* (*Bad Reputation: The Big Drum*, 1964), which was written by Fujimoto Gi'ichi.

its sequels, works that were produced once the characteristics of the serialization had more or less been established.

The *Akumyō* series offers a homosocial nationalistic narrative which constructs Japan's masculine subjectivity by upholding tradition. Unlike *ninkyō eiga* in which the dichotomy of tradition and modernity is transformed into a conflict between the good and the evil, this dichotomy is relocated to the contrast between the protagonists: that is, Asakichi is a stoic, stubborn, and traditional man, whereas Seiji is easygoing and thoroughly modern. Their contrasting characteristics are evident on a visual level, as Asakichi prefers to wear *wafuku* without *hakama* (a style called *kinagashi*) and Seiji wears a souvenir jacket. Despite their equally heroic statuses, the narrative structure makes it clear which one has a higher moral ground. In almost every installment, a conflict emerges due to Seiji's involvement with malicious business organized by the bad yakuza and Asakichi is tasked to solve the problem to save innocent everyday people. By making Asakichi a powerful bearer of tradition, the *Akumyō* series displays a nationalistic vision which imagines Japan's heroic resistance against modernity.

Such a narrative structure of the series is established in *Shin akumyō*. The film starts with Asakichi's surprising comeback from the war to his hometown Kawachi, which turns out to be unexpected for the people of the town since everyone had assumed his death. Disappointed by his wife's remarriage, Asakichi goes to Osaka to look for a local girl Tsukie (Hamada Yūko) who went missing after being harassed by American soldiers. Upon arriving at Osaka, Asakichi encounters Seiji, a business-oriented and English-speaking pimp who already sold Tsukie. Seiji's goal is to purchase the land where the black market is currently located and build an amusement park. The plan, however, is stolen by the evil yakuza Seiji works for. It also turns out that the establishment of

amusement facilities requires a forceful destruction of the black market. Asakichi and Seiji stand up and fight to prevent the destruction and save local people. Upon the restoration of the social order, Asakichi and Seiji mend their relationship. Seiji, who has now learned to keep his distance from the bad yakuza, swears brotherhood (but repeats the same mistake in the next film anyway). The narrative closes with the harmonious coexistence of tradition and modernity but makes it evident that the troublesome quality of modernization needs to tamed by traditional values. By doing so, the series constructs a masculine imagination that modernity can be controlled by the local yakuza.

The upholding of the nationalistic intersection of masculinity and tradition is founded upon homosocial desire. In *Akumyō ichiban* (*Bad Reputation: Number One*, 1963, the eighth installment), for example, an ardent exchange of homoerotic gaze is particularly visible. Before a final life-risking battle, the reconciliation of Asakichi and Seiji is staged in a highly melodramatic manner: close-up shots of their ardent gazes, grandiose background music, and their strong handshaking visualize the repression of their sexual stimuli. Their unexpressed but looming libido is strengthened by their shared commitment to visit the Yasukuni Shrine, which carries imperialistic connotations. The homoerotic interaction between Asakichi and Seiji is an example of an unsayable but present homosocial desire.

Ogin's presence in the series marks a contrast to the otherwise suppressed homosexual desire between Asakichi and Sada/Seiji. Ogin, who has big eyes and wears a *kimono* is a recurring character that appears in four installments: *Shin akumyō*, *Zoku shin akumyō* (*Another New Bad Reputation Story*, 1962, the fourth installment), *Akumyō ichiba* (*Bad Reputation: Marketplace*, 1963, the sixth installment), and *Akumyō ichiban*. Ogin is initially introduced as a villainous and flirtatious male prostitute running errands

for Seiji and evolves into Asakichi and Seiji's obedient friend later in the series.[111] More than anything, what characterizes Ogin is their comical disturbance of homosocial silence due to their strong homosexual interest in male bodies.

It is easily noticeable that Ogin is represented pejoratively. Other characters' reactions to Ogin are rooted in instinctive rejection, as they use phrases such as "*kishoku warui*" (gross) and "*samuke suru*" (makes me shiver). These homophobic treatments are directed at Ogin's performance of femininity such as their employment of women's language, their choice to wear women's *kimono*, and their *onnagata* occupation in the fourth installment. Ogin's transgression of gender norms causes confusion for some characters who cannot help but rudely refer to their gender presentation by saying "*otoko mitai*" (You're like a man) in the fourth installment and "*onna to chigau noka*" (Aren't you a woman?) in the sixth installment. The sexual politics of the film confuses gender presentation with sexual orientation, using Ogin's sexual orientation as an explanation for their gender nonconformity and to justify the pejorative treatment they receive. The series makes Ogin a countertype of masculinity, "an image against which it [masculinity] could define itself" (Mosse 56). By providing an image of the negative stereotype, masculinity can make itself as normative.

Having said that, Ogin's task is not simply to be the abject other but also to recognize the desirability of men to heighten the homoerotic charge of the series. This is done through the use of the typical comical routine of acknowledgement and rejection of homosexual desire between men. For example, upon Ogin's appearance, an active physical interaction occurs between them and the yakuza: mostly, Ogin constantly tries

[111] Though not depicted on a denotative level, Ogin's profession is hinted in the fourth installment. They go back on the street in the eighth installment.

to touch, tickle, and kiss the yakuza, but is met with the yakuza's hesitation, confusion, or strong physical rejection. The sexualization of the male bodies temporarily destabilizes masculine control, revealing that men can be eroticized. The butt of the joke is not only Ogin's sexual advances, but also the awkwardness of the eroticization of the male bodies. Although the series portrays women as love interests of male heroes, and emphasizes their heterosexual orientation, it also acknowledges homosexual desire, by making references to the attractiveness of the yakuza, and homophobically refusing it.

The acknowledgement-refusal routine takes a seemingly different but eventually similar form in *Akumyō ichiba*. Discouraged by his bad reputation, Asakichi questions the meaning of his chivalrous activities and Ogin, acting like a good listener, lifts his spirits up. During the scene in which they converse, however, there is hardly any exchange of gazes. To be more precise, Ogin's affectionate gaze is constantly betrayed by Asakichi, who keeps facing the sea. The rejection of Ogin's gaze can signify Asakichi's masculine omnipotence. In his analysis of male pin-ups, Richard Dyer contends that the male model averts his eyes by looking away or up, to show his spirituality or lack of interest to be looked at ("Don't" 63). Ogin's gaze is not reciprocated and only emphasizes the desirability of Asakichi whose mind is on the end of the horizon, on a higher spiritual level.

The sexual politics of the *Akumyō* series is marked by the co-existence of homosocial and homosexual desires. By upholding Japanese traditional values, the homosocial desire between Asakichi and Seiji produces nationalistic sentiments. Ogin's non-normative gender presentation ensures the safe consumption of their homosocial relationship, allowing homoerotic male bonding to avoid persecution. However, Ogin's persistent sexual advances towards the yakuza highlight their desirability; it is the

possessor of homosexual desire that is rejected, not the desire itself. Thus, Ogin embodies the paradox of homosocial desire: the acknowledgement and rejection of homoeroticism are inseparable.

Abashiri Bangai-chi, a Parody of *Ninkyō Eiga*[112]

The ideological task of effeminate characters takes a different turn in the *Abashiri bangai-chi* series. Its ten installments gained enormous popularity as part of the Tōei yakuza film series starring Takakura, along with the *Nihon kyōkyaku-den* series and the *Shōwa zankyō-den* series.[113] The particularity of *Abashiri bangai-chi* is a self-referential parodic quality, which exposes the fallacy of binary notions in *ninkyō eiga* such as tradition and modernity, and homosociality and homosexuality. The series especially exaggerates male bodies and unapologetically expresses homoeroticism between men. This is where effeminate characters come in.

In English-language scholarship, *Abashiri bangai-chi* and other *ninkyō eiga* have been analyzed in a similar vein. Particularly notable is Standish's *Myth and Masculinity in the Japanese Cinema* (2000), where the yakuza's homosocial bond is scrutinized for supplementing Neo-Confucian patriarchal structures and institutions. According to Standish, Tachibana, the heroic protagonist in the series, is in symbolic "harmony with traditional Japanese values" as he is associated with local festivals, swords over guns, and rice balls over sandwiches (*Myth* 166). The endorsement of traditional values is

[112] An early version of my analysis of the *Abashiri bangai-chi* series appeared in *Japanese Studies*. See Kato ("A Man").
[113] Right after the end of the first series, the *Shin Abashiri bangai-chi* (*New Abashiri Prison*) series (1968-1972) was produced by Shundō. As the new version is quite different from the older one, this paper exclusively focuses on the first series.

intertwined with the type of masculinity Tachibana embodies. It is termed as reflexive masochism by Standish, the idea that "the endurance of pain becomes one of the mechanisms of male bonding" (*Myth* 179). Combining Freudian psychoanalysis and Mishima Yukio's work, Standish's theorization of yakuza masculinity is cast as more masochistic than sadistic as "moral victory is gained in defeat" (*Myth* 179). As a means to deter identification with a passive masochistic position, however, the series introduces effeminate characters. In Standish's words, "These homosexual characters […] are in fact metonymic constructions that represent the antithesis of the ideal of masculinity represented by Takakura Ken. Thus their inclusion in the group is to provide a negative counterpoise to Tachibana's positive characteristics" (*Myth* 173). By denying the passive and subordinate position, the series can uphold reflexive masochism and preserve Neo-Confucian traditional values.

This chapter contends almost the opposite of Standish's analysis of the *Abashiri bangai-chi* series. Along with basic factual errors, Standish's argument is problematic for several reasons.[114] First, Tachibana is not simply in harmony with Japanese traditional values and items. As the subsequent analysis will show, the uniqueness of *Abashiri bangai-chi* lies in its deconstruction of the dichotomy of tradition and modernity. Second, it is not convincing how Tachibana's masculinity can be regarded as masochistic when he manages to strike a vast number of enemies in every installment. Third, effeminate characters are not merely in a passive position and "take on subordinate roles normally assigned to women and junior males," as Standish argues (*Myth* 173). Instead, what characterizes effeminate characters is their very *active* sexual energy directed towards the

[114] For example, Standish writes, "Fourteen films [of *Abashiri bangai-chi*] were made" (*Myth* 158). In actuality, the first series has ten instalments and the second series has eight.

attractive male physique. It is the overemphasis of homoeroticism, not reflexive masochism, that is at the core of male bonding.

Abashiri bangai-chi's peculiar position in the *ninkyō eiga* genre can be explained by its production background. Unlike other *ninkyō eiga* titles, the series was neither produced by Shundō, the father of *ninkyō eiga*, and nor shot at the Tōei Kyoto studio. Instead, all ten installments were written and directed by Ishii Teruo at the Tōei Tokyo studio with a lot of location shooting.[115] A geographical distance from Shundō and the traditionally *jidaigeki*-oriented Kyoto studio allowed the series to have more creative freedom from the confinement of virtually indistinguishable *ninkyō eiga*.

The *Abashiri bangai-chi* series is a distinct *ninkyō eiga* in that it complicates its own seriality. Due to multiple contradictions contained within the series, what makes it a unified film series is difficult to define. Despite its title, for example, not every film is set in the northern country where the Abashiri Prison is: *Bōkyō-hen* (*Saga of Homesickness*, 1965, the third installment), *Nangoku no taiketsu* (*Duel in the South*, 1966, the sixth installment), and *Aku e no chōsen* (*Challenging the Wicked*, 1967, the ninth installment) are located in the southern areas, Nagasaki, Okinawa, and Fukuoka respectably. Moreover, each installment frequently makes specific references to various film genres. While *Bōkyō-hen* is closest to a conventional *ninkyō eiga*, the other installments explore the conventions of diverse Hollywood film genres, such as the prison film and the Western, in *Abashiri bangai-chi* (*Abashiri Prison*, 1965, the first installment) and *Kōya no taiketsu* (*Duel in the Wilderness*, 1966, the fifth installment) respectively. Serial inconsistencies were a conscious attempt of Ishii who wanted each film to be different (Ishii and Fukuma 162). Ishii's disruption of serial recursivity made contemporary critics unsure of how to

[115] The seventh installment was written by Kōnami Fumio and Matsuda Hiro'o, not Ishii.

talk about the *Abashiri bangai-chi* series. For instance, Tayama Rikiya regards the series as yakuza films, but notes their modern touch and lighthearted humor, which are usually absent in the genre ("*Abashiri*" 136–137). Watanabe Takenobu denounces the idea that the *Abashiri Bangai-chi* series is part of the yakuza genre because of its absence of the conflict between *giri* and *ninjō* (*Hero* 118). As noted by these critics, the *Abashiri Bangai-chi* series is too disorganized to be regarded as a consistent series and categorized in a particular genre.

Another unique aspect of the series is its mimetic quality. As mentioned above, the series constantly borrows from diverse existing genres such as *ninkyō eiga*, Tōei's gang series, the Western, and the road movie, among others. It also references some specific American films: the first installment is inspired by *The Defiant Ones* (1958), *Bōkyō-hen*'s battle sequence comes from *Vera Cruz* (1954) (Shiba and Aoyama 35), the shooting competition in *Kōya no taiketsu* alludes to *Winchester '73* (1950), and *Aku e no chōsen* has rebellious youths snapping their fingers like dancers in *West Side Story* (1961). Such constant imitations of locally and globally recognized cinematic images make *Abashiri bangai-chi* a product of cinematic intertextuality.

The significance of the series' intertextual references lies in the parodic negation of conflict between tradition and modernity. "Parody" here refers to "any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice" (Dentith 9). By blending the elements of *ninkyō eiga*, genre films, and Hollywood cinema, *Abashiri bangai-chi* refuses to provide a nationalistic narrative in which traditional values are upheld to secure Japan's subject position. Instead, the series is characterized by the disharmonious coexistence of tradition and modernity, or what the critics call, "a mismatch" (Shiba and Aoyama 34–35). In one scene, for example,

Takakura's traditionally Japanese star persona is betrayed by dancing with half-naked girls and ordering a Johnny Walker. In battle sequences, Takakura often wears a trench coat with a Japanese sword. These images deconstruct *ninkyō eiga*'s portrayal of the harmonious association between the good yakuza and tradition. As Fukazawa Tetsuya humorously mentions, a viewing experience of the *Abashiri Bangai-chi* series is like "eating sushi while drinking Coca-Cola" (92), a playful intermixture of tradition and modernity. The series' parodic subversion of the yakuza film invalidates *ninkyō eiga*'s upholding of tradition. The time setting in *Abashiri bangai-chi* is left unspecified, and the series merely introduces many intertextual imitations. The series' negation of historical specificity utterly ignores the ideological project of *ninkyō eiga*, as it does not fabricate a world where the disparity between modernity and modernization is not a problem.

Not only does *Abashiri bangai-chi* disapprove *ninkyō eiga*'s support for tradition, but it also playfully exposes the presence of homoeroticism between the yakuza. The series homoerotically and unapologetically exaggerates male bodies as visual spectacles. The eroticization of male bodies becomes noticeable because the *Abashiri bangai-chi* series frequently includes bathing sequences. In *Kōya no taiketsu*, for example, the naked bodies of five inmates in the bath are displayed as visual spectacles by using a tracking shot. A subsequent shot captures the men washing the backs of the senior yakuza inmates, which emits an atmosphere of homoerotic intimacy. The scene bluntly sexualizes the half-naked bodies of the men, casting them in an erotic light.

Furthermore, in the tenth installment, a bathing scene makes a reference to the act of gazing at male bodies. In it, Tachibana confronts an outlaw (Andō Noboru) when Tachibana is taking a bath with Maki (Umemiya Tatsuo). As the sounds of combative music begin to play, Tachibana and the outlaw stand up naked and intensely look at each

other. The following two long shots "coincidentally" conceal the private parts of the two characters, using rocks in the foreground. The film's conscious attempt to veil the private parts conversely places more focus on their male organs. The shot then switches to a close-up of the face of Maki, who is looking at the private parts of Tachibana, the outlaw, and himself, and comparing the sizes of their genitals. Here Maki serves as a mediator of desire, allowing the spectators to appreciate the hidden phallic symbols indirectly. The film includes the mediator between the sexualized bodies and the viewers who consume them to bring awareness to the desire inherent in the act of gazing at naked bodies.

In both cases, the sexualization of the male bodies is done in a playful manner, as if the series is making a reference to the existence of homoeroticism between the yakuza in *ninkyō eiga* and is making fun of their fierce attempt to deny it. Through the parodic deformation of the style of its referent, the *Abashiri Bangai-chi* series playfully discloses the presence of desire between the yakuza which the genre downplays.

More than anything, effeminate characters are active generators of desire who breaks the silence surrounding homoerotic interests among the yakuza. Since the first appearance in the fourth installment, effeminate characters, mostly played by Yoshino Toshio, Sunazuka Hideo, and Yuri Tōru, have been an integral member of the Abashiri inmates until the ninth installment.[116] It is apparent that the series' treatments of effeminate characters are rooted in homophobia. In the very first entrance in *Hokkai-hen*, for instance, No. 7 (Yoshino Toshio), an effeminate newcomer from Paris, suddenly starts singing "La Cucaracha," dancing joyfully, and doing an imitation of fellatio. These characters are certainly products of imagination in a heteronormative society where the

[116] Yoshino is a queer figure who is famous for opening a gay bar in Roppongi in 1963. Yoshino's participation in constructing an image of sexual minorities needs to be carefully considered in future research.

existence of sexual minorities is unacknowledged.

However, recurring appearances of effeminate characters in the *Abashiri Bangai-chi* series do not deny but underline the presence of desire in the male community. The parodic revelation of homoerotic desire is done by using the acknowledgement-refusal routine more radically than the *Akumyō* series. In the *Abashiri Bangai-chi* series, constant sexual advances of effeminate characters to the protagonist are treated comically by showing Tachibana's rejection or running away. In *Hokkai-hen*, for instance, the newcomer's aggressive groping of Tachibana is desperately rejected. *Daisetsugen no tatakai* (*Duel in the Snow Country*, 1966, the seventh installment) humorously includes a sexual innuendo in which Tachibana smells with disgust a rice ball to which pubic hair is attached because No. 110 (Yuri Tōru) hid it in their underwear. An effeminate character (Yoshino Toshio) in *Aku e no chosen* so passionately chases Tachibana that the protagonist runs away. These running gags call attention to the desirability of Tachibana's body and treat his discomfort as the butt of the joke. This shows that the effeminate characters are not only victims of ridicule but also active generators of homoerotic desire. Their intense and unapologetic displays of desire often leave Tachibana feeling powerless as they push him to deny homoerotic desire and comically flee in fear. The uncontainable libido of the effeminate characters perplexes the yakuza and temporarily disrupts the masculine order. While the effeminate characters are repeatedly rejected, their sexual desire resurfaces as long as the homosocial community of the yakuza persists. Thus, the acknowledgement-refusal routine in the *Abashiri bangai-chi* series can be understood as the parodic enactment of the premise of homosocial desire, in which the presence of erotic desire between men inevitably calls for its denial.

Moreover, the series also hints at the possibility of homosexual relations that

took place in the Abashiri Prison. This is evident in the bar sequence where former inmates devise a strategy to fight against their enemies in the sixth installment. In it, Kashiyama (Yuri Tōru) is subjected to physical violence by several inmates. This is because Kashiyama becomes jealous of sexual interests of the inmates in women, despite having had homosexual relationships during their time in the Abashiri Prison. A close-up of Kashiyama, who is missing the prison, is switched to a montage sequence in which fragments of previous installments are cut together to present the memory of Abashiri in a nostalgic light. The montage highlights the yakuza's collective hardship of manual labors and after-work bathing, that includes washing the backs of the senior yakuza inmates. These physical acts are sentimentally depicted with the uses of desaturated color and an instrumental version of the series' sorrowful theme song. The nostalgic longing for the male intimacy depicted in previous installments does not merely call attention to the current denial of homosexual relationships outside the prison, but also provides a possible queer reading practice of the yakuza film. That is, Kashiyama's nostalgic reminiscence of the homosexual past allows a queer reading of the homosocial environments of the prison in previous installments.

The presence of homoerotic desire among the yakuza, however, is not deemed to be a threat that should be eliminated but further augments the strength of their homosocial bond. The final battle sequence in *Kōya no taiketsu* is a case in which the harmonious coexistence of homosociality and homoeroticism is imagined possible. In it, Samejima (Sugiura Naoki), an ex-convict from the Abashiri Prison, threatens to kill the villain Gonda (Kawazu Seizaburō) and his innocent daughter for vengeance. However, Tachibana steps in and takes a bullet to save the daughter. As Tachibana, still competent, again puts himself between Samejima and the daughter, the buddies join Tachibana to

protect her. What follows is a series of close-up shots in which each character silently and intensely gazes at each other, until Samejima puts his gun down and smiles are back on everybody's faces. In this scene, the foundation of the yakuza's chivalrous spirit is not based on a Neo-Confucian hierarchical relationship, as Standish argues, but rather on the homosocial desire shared between the former convicts at the Abashiri Prison. Samejima is a typical rival character in the series, who ends up taking the side of Tachibana, despite their initial antagonism. Through their intense eye-contacts and eventual smiles, the values of the community are implicitly understood, which leads to the maintenance of a homosocial order. In the close-up shots, there are two different looks directed towards Samejima: Kashiyama's suggestive look and Tachibana's wink. While Kashiyama's homosexual interest in Samejima and Tachibana's homosocial intimacy towards him are juxtaposed, the sequence combines both looks together with a reaction shot of Samejima, who cheerfully receives Kashiyama's sexual advance. By incorporating homosocial and homosexual desires in the same male community, the film reveals that desire between men, whether homosocial or homosexual, is the foundation of the homosocial system and this desire is not motivated by anything other than itself.

By invalidating traditional values and exaggerating homoeroticism, the *Abashiri bangai-chi* series introspectively discredits the ideologies of *ninkyō eiga* and presents it as a parody. The series does so by humorously making it apparent that desire is at the core of homosocial relations. Blunt expressions of erotic desire between men depicted in the series imply that the ritualistic popularity of *ninkyō eiga* – repeatedly adoring male bodies in virtually identical yakuza films for a decade – was strongly motivated by desire of viewers towards masculinity in the 1960s. The effeminate characters are subversive vehicles that channel the series' criticism by embodying societal demands in consuming

male bodies.

Conclusion

The preceding analyses examined the role of effeminate characters in homosocial environments, particularly focusing on the yakuza film. In the 1960s when Japan's geopolitical role was questioned, the film industry saw the emergence of male heroes in locally-produced, action-oriented films. Some films ideologically functioned to construct the masculine subjectivity, which, like the capable yakuza symbolized by Takakura's star persona in *ninkyō eiga*, imagines Japan as an active subject who can take control of historical transformations. The yakuza film, however, with the inclusion of effeminate characters, has the potential to complicate its homosocial nature by playing with homosocial desire between men. In the case of the *Akumyō* series, Ogin's homosexual desire towards Asakichi and Seiji embodies the paradox of homosocial desire in which the acknowledgement and rejection of homoeroticism are intertwined. The *Abashiri bangai-chi* series is a more radical case in which homoeroticism in the male-dominated environment is parodically exposed in response to the denial of desire between men in *ninkyō eiga*. For better or worse, effeminate characters bring to the surface the desire existing in homosocial bonds, regardless of whether this desire is eventually rejected or not.

The adoration of male heroes and *ninkyō eiga* might have provided viewers with an imaginary solution to the disparity of modernity and modernization, as if Japan's feminized past has been overcome. However, the analyses through effeminacy imply a different understanding. Some Japanese films in the 1960s required effeminacy as a

benchmark against which masculinity can be measured. Although the images of male heroes on Japan's cinematic screen constructed the ideal of national subject, Japan was still haunted by its effeminate past.

This chapter's analyses of the yakuza film suggest a self-reflective quality of the genre. The yakuza film has often been recognized as a conservative genre that constructs the concept of manliness, but its obsession with being a man has the possibility to expose the constructedness of masculinity. Moreover, excessive styles and presentations of men's physicalities in the yakuza film provide a critical self-awareness that homosocial yakuza relationships are connected by desire. Such self-reflective potential of the yakuza film should be explored fully in further research.

Conclusion

This research examined effeminate characters in Japanese cinema from 1945 to 1969, in order to explore their historical transformations and ideological implications in relation to the socio-political dynamics of post-war society. It is partly a historical project that contextualizes effeminate representations to investigate the condition of their representability. At the same time, it also explored the ideological role they played in constituting a gendered subjectivity in Japan after the defeat in World War II.

The first chapter focused on the portrayal of male prostitutes as part of the culture of defeat, during a time of social confusion and reform. The examination of the *Eirin*'s self-regulation practices revealed a paradoxical attitude towards the representation of *danshō*, in which their obscenity was emphasized, yet ultimately allowed to remain unaltered. This contradictory stance is apparent at the level of filmic representation as well, where male prostitutes offer various forms of humor that make the upheaval of the defeat more enjoyable.

The second chapter delved into the depiction of the modern boy, which responded to post-war democratic reforms and the promotion of gender equality. The pre-war cultural imagination of effeminacy was revisited in the post-war era as a means to navigate changing gender norms. The modern boy can be seen as a reactionary figure, which satirically highlights and imagines the feminization of men resulting from democratization, modernization, and the rising status of women.

In the third chapter, the sisterboy craze was analyzed in the context of the formation of consumer society in Japan. Effeminacy was turned into a spectacle that was consumed, as there was a trend of commodifying exaggerated sexualities and gender

performances. The fascination with the sisterboy led to the transformation of its extraordinary body into a meaningless spectacle that evoked affective sensations.

The fourth chapter explored the increased exposure of the gay boy following the gay boom of 1958. With the Motion Picture Code of Ethics being revised, a cautious approach was taken towards the portrayal of homosexuality, which ironically led to a clearer depiction of gay boys. The conceptualization of gay images in Japanese cinema established a framework for the consumption of gay boys, either through the exploitation of the transgressive or by symbolizing Japan's subjugated position within the narrative.

The fifth chapter focused on the popularity of yakuza films in the 1960s, which strongly promoted traditional ideas and constructed a masculine subjectivity. The inclusion of effeminate characters within a homosocial community parodically reveals how the construction of masculinity inevitably relies on the rejection of femininity. Effeminacy embodies a self-referential quality of the yakuza film, exposing how the idolization of the male body is motivated by desire for masculinity.

The above analyses reveal that effeminate characters were shaped by a variety of social and industrial circumstances. Oftentimes, these socio-political contexts were tied to Japan's social formation after the defeat: cultures of defeat which emerged out of the aftermath of the war led to the visibility of male prostitutes, and the modern boy emerged as a reaction to the implementation of gender equality by the Occupation forces. The formation of consumer society also had an impact on effeminate representations, as the sisterboy and the gay boy emerged during the booms in 1957 and 1958, respectively. The changes also came from the film industry, especially the organization and reformation of the *Eirin*, affecting how effeminacy could be depicted in Japanese cinema. The popularity of the yakuza film was a unique case in which a specific genre significantly impacted the

representation of effeminate characters. Overall, the condition of effeminate representability in post-war Japanese cinema was constructed by diverse social and industrial circumstances.

On an ideological level, effeminate characters served as a platform for negotiating Japan's gendered subjectivity. It is difficult to make a decisive argument on their ultimate effects since they appear in various films for different purposes. In some cases, their trivial screen presence functioned to redraw a line between the normative and the non-normative by, for example, being laughed off, as seen in films such as *Yoru no yajū* and *Aoiro kakumei*. In other instances, effeminate characters had the ability to challenge or disrupt the normative notions of masculinity and femininity, albeit temporarily, by playing with the binary of the two genders. A self-deprecating humor in *Joyū to meitantei*, a fantasy scenario in *Ankoku no ryoken*, and effeminate usurpers of yakuza community all reveal masculinity's reliance on effeminacy to construct a male subject in post-war Japanese society. In any case, effeminate characters epitomize the discourse of feminization after the defeat, a misogynistic imagination of Japan's subjugated state, which simultaneously opens up a space for the revelation of their function.

Furthermore, the analysis suggests that effeminacy is an integral part of the cinematic pleasure-making system. Since popular films are ultimately commodities for mass audiences, the inclusion of effeminate characters in the texts is purposed to captivate viewers. In various genres of films, they can evoke laugher, fear, or a sense of intrigue by inviting the audience to the urban underground world. Their recurring appearances in Japanese cinema to entertain the audience imply their enduring popularity despite (or because of) their ambiguous sexualities. Effeminacy was embraced more than it was

repulsed, as playing with social norms was an integral part of cinematic entertainment.

That being said, the popularity of effeminate characters should not be celebrated without reservation. This is because their screen depictions rely on effeminate stereotypes, which oftentimes signal non-normative sexualities in a ridiculing manner. With little agency of actual queer people, effeminate representations draw from these stereotypes and, by doing so, performatively perpetuate a cultural imaginary that stigmatizes sexual minorities. This implies that the popularity of effeminate characters and their challenge to conventional norms can only be achieved through the exploitation of constructed images that shape the imagination of sexual minorities.

The above findings contribute to academic discourses on Japanese cinema in various ways. First, they fill a gap in literature where the misrepresentation of sexual minorities in Japanese cinema is underexamined. This research reveals that a cinematic imagination of sexual minorities was shaped by various social and industrial factors as Japan reformed its social structure after the defeat. Also, the findings suggest that damaging representations can be widely accepted and popular for the consumption of viewers in a heteronormative society. Overall, the findings indicate that effeminacy is more nuanced than a simple stereotype or misrepresentation.

Second, this research offers an alternative way to look at the cinematic formation of Japan's gendered subjectivity after the defeat. Previous studies have employed a binary framework that conceptualizes Japan's subject formation as castrated men overshadowed by liberated women after the war. Effeminacy is a new theoretical approach that engages with the complexities of national reconstruction by playing with the gender binary. The analyses of effeminate characters demonstrate that, albeit temporarily, films provide viewers with the opportunity to enjoy the disruption of gender norms and embrace a

feminized state. This indicates an effeminate aspect of Japan's gendered identity that complicates the representation of men using women's liberated bodies to restore male subjects.

Despite this research's comprehensive analysis of effeminate representations in Japanese cinema from 1945 to 1969, there is still room for investigation. First, this research was unable to explore the agency of performers who played the effeminate characters. This is especially important because, despite being stereotypical, these characters were oftentimes portrayed by actual queer figures, such as Kenny Aoki in *Ankoku no ryoken* and Yoshino Toshio in the *Abashiri bangai-chi* series. Further investigation can explore whether they had any agency to express their queer ways of being during the process of portraying effeminate characters.

Furthermore, this research was unable to cover the representation of effeminacy in film or other media beyond the 1960s. Effeminate characters are a prevalent type that continues to be depicted in various forms of media today, including television, anime, and comic books. Further research is necessary to investigate how these representations are similar or dissimilar to the ones in popular films from the 1950s and the 1960s. In addition, from the 1970s onwards, male homosexuality came to be disassociated from effeminacy as gender-normative gay characters emerged on screen, such as in Nishimura Kiyoshi's *Hakucyū no syūgeki* (*Attack at Daylight*, 1970). Future research can explore how these depictions of effeminacy and homosexuality are shaped by social and industrial factors.

Anyone who has seriously studied Japanese cinema history must have encountered effeminate characters. Despite being prevalent in the works of prominent filmmakers such as Ichikawa Kon, Kawashima Yūzō, and Masumura Yasuzō, effeminate representations have been left unacknowledged in the scholarship of Japanese cinema due

to their trivialness, unintelligibility, and ambiguity. Nevertheless, it is precisely the fluidity and indefiniteness of effeminate characters that challenge us to reconsider the role of stereotype, Japanese film history, and post-war Japanese society. The traces left by effeminate characters do not make it easier for us to understand the past, but they provide a valuable framework for reassessing the past to create a better future.

Works Cited

"5000 Nin no Shitsugyōsha: Gendai no Kikeiji Gay Boy No SOS [5000 Unemployed: SOS of Modern Abnormal Gay Boys]." *Shūkan Taishū*, vol. 1, no. 18, 18 Aug. 1958, pp. 24–27.

"Abura no Notta Ichikawa Kantoku [Director Ichikawa on a Roll]." *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 10 June 1953, p. 4.

Abe, Hideko. *Queer Japanese: Gender and Sexual Identities through Linguistic Practices*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Aikawa, Kō. "Yoru no Gay Boy Tachi [Night Gay Boys]." *Bessatsu Chisei*, vol. 3, Sept. 1956, pp. 202–08.

Allan, Jonathan A. "Femininity and Effeminophobia in Manuel Puig's *Kiss of the Spider Woman*." *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, vol. 47, no. 3, 2014, pp. 71–87.

Ambaras, David R. *Bad Youth: Juvenile Delinquency and the Politics of Everyday Life in Modern Japan*. University of California Press, 2006.

Anderson, Mark. *Japan and the Specter of Imperialism*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Anderson, Robert. *Tea and Sympathy: A Drama in Three Acts*. Samuel French, 1955.

Barnett, Lois. "The Modern Boy and the Screen: Media Representation of Young Urban Men Wearing Western Style Clothing in 1920s and 1930s Japan." *Japan Beyond Its Borders: Transnational Approaches to Film and Media*, edited by Marcos P. Centeno-Martín and Norimasa Morita, Seibunsha, 2020, pp. 67–84.

Barrios, Richard. *Screened Out: Playing Gay in Hollywood from Edison to Stonewall*. Routledge, 2003.

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. Translated by Chris Turner, SAGE Publications, 1998.

Beattie, James. "On Laughter, and Ludicrous Composition." *Essays*, Edinburgh, 1776, pp. 321–486.

Benshoff, Harry M., and Sean Griffin. *Queer Images: A History of Gay and Lesbian Film in America*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

Berkowitz, Dana, et al., editors. *Male Femininities*. New York University Press, 2023.

Brown, Shane. *Queer Sexualities in Early Film: Cinema and Male-Male Intimacy*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016.

Bruzzi, Stella. *Men's Cinema: Masculinity and* Mise En Scène *in Hollywood*. Edinburgh University Press, 2013.

Bullock, Julia C., et al. *Rethinking Japanese Feminisms*. University of Hawaii Press, 2019.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 2015.

Carroll, William. *Suzuki Seijun and Postwar Japanese Cinema*. eBook, Columbia University Press, 2022.

Cavell, Stanley. *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage*. Harvard University Press, 1981.

Chaplin, Elayne. "Death and Duty: The On-Screen Yakuza." *A Companion to the Gangster Film*, edited by George S. Larke-Walsh, Wiley Blackwell, 2019, pp. 353–76.

Chauncey, George. "Tea and Sympathy." *Past Imperfect: History According to the Movies*, edited by Mark C. Carnes et al., Henry Holt and Company, 1996, pp. 258–61.

Coates, Jennifer. "Gambling with the Nation: Heroines of the Japanese Yakuza Film, 1955–1975." *Japanese Studies*, vol. 37, no. 3, 2017, pp. 353–69.

Connell, R. W. *Masculinities*. University of California Press, 2005.

Cook, Pam. *Screening the Past: Memory and Nostalgia in Cinema*. Routledge, 2005.

Debord, Guy. *Society of the Spectacle*. Translated by Ken Knabb, Rebel Press, 2005.

Deleyto, Celestino. "Film Genres at the Crossroads: What Genres and Films Do to Each Other." *Film Genre Reader IV*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, University of Texas Press, 2012, pp. 218–36.

Dentith, Simon. *Parody*. Routledge, 2002.

Doherty, Thomas. *Hollywood's Censor: Joseph I. Breen and the Production Code Administration*. Columbia University Press, 2007.

Dower, John W. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. W.W. Norton, 2000.

Dyer, Richard. "Don't Look Now." *Screen*, vol. 23, no. 3–4, Sept. 1982, pp. 61–73.

---. "Resistance Through Charisma: Rita Hayworth and Gilda." *Women in Film Noir*, edited by E. Ann Kaplan, British Film Institute, 1998, pp. 115–22.

---. *The Culture of Queers*. Routledge, 2005.

---. *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representations*. Routledge, 1993.

Eibun Hōrei-sha, translator. *The Prostitution Prevention Law of Japan: (Law No. 118, May 24, 1956)*. Eibun Hōrei-sha, 2011.

Eiga Nenkan 1958-nenban [*Film Yearbook, 1958 Edition*]. Jijitsūshin-sha, 1958.

Eiga Rinri Kitei Kanri I'inkai. *Eiga Rinri Kitei Shinsa Kiroku 17* [*Examination Records of Film Ethics Regulations 17*]. Eiga Rinri Kitei Kanri-bu, 1950.

---. *Eiga Rinri Kitei Shinsa Kiroku 18* [*Examination Records of Film Ethics Regulations 18*]. Eiga Rinri Kitei Kanri-bu, 1950.

---. *Eiga Rinri Kitei Shinsa Kiroku 21* [*Examination Records of Film Ethics Regulations*

21]. Eiga Rinri Kitei Kanri-bu, 1951.

---. *Eiga Rinri Kitei Shinsa Kiroku 22* [*Examination Records of Film Ethics Regulations 22*]. Eiga Rinri Kitei Kanri I'inkai, 1951.

---. *Eiga Rinri Kitei Shinsa Kiroku 78* [*Examination Records of Film Ethics Regulations 78*]. Eiga Rinri Kitei Kanri I'inkai, 1956.

Eiga Rinri Kitei [*The Motion Picture Code of Ethics*]. Eirin Kanri I'inkai, 1959.

Eirin Kanri I'inkai. *Eirin 50-nen no Ayumi* [*The 50-Year History of Eirin*]. Eirin Kanri I'inkai, 2006.

Endō, Tatsuo. *Eirin: Rekishi to Jiken* [*Eirin: History and Events*]. Perikan-sha, 1973.

"Enshutsusareta Tōsaku no Miryoku [The Allure of Staged Perversion]." *Shūkan Tokyo*, vol. 3, no. 26, June 1957, pp. 60–61.

Fischer, Kirsten Cather. *The Art of Censorship in Postwar Japan*. University of Hawaii Press, 2012.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley, Pantheon Books, 1978.

Freud, Sigmund. *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. Translated by James Strachey, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960.

Fukazawa, Tetsuya. "Yakuza Eiga no Keifu: Yakuza Eiga Hanjō-Ki" [Genealogy of the Yakuza Film: Prosperity of the Yakuza Film]." *Ninkyō Eiga no Sekai* [*The World of Ninkyo Films*], edited by Kenkichi Kusumoto, Arechi-shuppansha, 1969, pp. 79–102.

"Funsō ni Umoreta Seishun [Youth Buried in Disguise]." *Shūkan Shinchō*, vol. 2, no. 30, 29 July 1957, p. 13.

Furukawa, Makoto. "The Changing Nature of Sexuality: Three Codes Framing Homosexuality in Modern Japan." *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal. English Supplement*, no. 7, 1994, pp. 98–127.

Fushimi, Noriaki. *Shinjuku Ni-Chōme* [*Shinjuku's Second Ward*]. Shinchō-sha, 2019.

Futaba, Junzaburō. "*Ocha to Dōjō* [*Tea and Sympathy*]." *Eiga no Tomo*, vol. 25, no. 5, Apr. 1957, pp. 56–59.

Gaikoku Eiga Shuppan. *Ocha to Dōjō* [*Tea and Sympathy*]. 1957.

Gates, Philippa. *Detecting Men: Masculinity and the Hollywood Detective Film*. State University of New York Press, 2006.

"Gay Boy no Seikatsu to Iken [Life and Opinions of Gay Boys]." *Myōjō*, vol. 7, no. 4, Mar. 1958, p. 257.

Gerstner, David. "The Production and Display of the Closet: Making Minnelli's 'Tea and Sympathy.'" *Film Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 3, 1997, pp. 13–26.

Glitre, Kathrina. *Hollywood Romantic Comedy: States of the Union, 1934-1965*. Manchester University Press, 2006.

González-López, Irene. *The Prostitute in Postwar Japanese Cinema (1945-1975): Melodrama, Soft-Porn, and the Body Politics of Modernisation*. 2017. SOAS, University of London, PhD dissertation.

Grant, Barry Keith. *Shadows of Doubt: Negotiations of Masculinity in American Genre Films*. Wayne State University Press, 2010.

Halberstam, Jack. *Female Masculinity*. Duke University Press, 2019.

Halperin, David M. "How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, Jan. 2000, pp. 87–123.

Hanson, Ellis. "Introduction." *Out Takes: Essays on Queer Theory and Film*, edited by Ellis Hanson, Duke University Press, 1999, pp. 1–19.

Harris, Daniel. "Effeminacy." *Michigan Quarterly Review*, vol. 30, no. 1, 1991, pp. 72–81.

Hennefeld, Maggie. "Queer Laughter in the Archives of Silent Film Comedy." *The Oxford Handbook of Queer Cinema*, edited by Amy Villarejo and Ronald Gregg, Oxford University Press, 2021, pp. 93–121.

Henry, Todd A. "Between Surveillance and Liberation: The Lives of Cross-Dressed Male Sex Workers in Early Postwar Japan." *The Transgender Studies Reader 2*, edited by Susan Stryker and Aren Z. Aizura, Routledge, 2013, pp. 403–17.

Hirano, Kyoko. *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo: Japanese Cinema under the American Occupation, 1945-1952*. Smithsonian Institution, 1992.

Hirooka Moriho. *Tsūzoku Shōsetsu-ron: Ren'ai to Democracy* [*Popular Fiction Theory: Romance and Democracy*]. Yūshindō Kōbun-sha, 2018.

Hobbes, Thomas. "Human Nature." *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, edited by William Molesworth, vol. 4, Bohn, 1840, pp. 1–77.

Hoshi Ryōtarō. "Kihachi no Ichiban Wakai Hi: Okamoto Kihachi *Kekkon no Subete* Ron [Kihachi's Youngest Day: A Study of Okamoto Kihachi's *All about Marriage*]." *Film Studies*, no. 34, 2020, pp. 68–81.

Hyams, Barbara, and Nancy Harrowitz. "A Critical Introduction to the History of Weininger Reception." *Jews and Gender: Responses to Otto Weininger*, vol. 1, Temple University Press, 1992, pp. 21–48.

Ichikawa, Kon, and Natto Wada. *Seijōchō 271 Banchi: Aru Eiga Sakka no Tawagoto* [*271 Seijōchō: Mumbo Jumbo of a Filmmaker*]. Shirakaba-shobō, 1961.

Igarashi, Yoshikuni. *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970*. Princeton University Press, 2012.

---. *Japan, 1972: Visions of Masculinity in an Age of Mass Consumerism*. Columbia University Press, 2021.

Ikeda, Michiko. "Nanshokuron: Sisterboy no Miryoku [Male Color Theory: The Charms of the Sisterboy]." *Fujin Kōron*, vol. 42, no. 11, Nov. 1957, pp. 168–73.

Inoue, Miyako. "Gender, Language, and Modernity: Toward an Effective History of Japanese Women's Language." *American Ethnologist*, vol. 29, May 2002, pp. 392–422.

Iseki, Masao. *Good Idea: Senden de Shōbusuru* [*Good Idea: Competing with Publicity*]. Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1965.

Ishii, Teruo, and Kenji Fukuma. *Kanpon: Teruo Ishii Eiga-Damashii* [*Soul of Filmmaker Teruo Ishii: Complete Edition*]. Waizu Shuppan, 2012.

Ivy, Marilyn. "Formations of Mass Culture." *Postwar Japan as History*, edited by Andrew Gordon, University of California Press, 1993, pp. 239–58.

Iwamoto, Kenji. *Nihon Eiga to Modernism, 1920-1930* [*Japanese Cinema and Modernism, 1920-1930*]. Riburopōto, 1991.

"Iyarashii Enshutsu [Indecent Direction]." *Asahi Shimbun*, 15 June 1953, p. 2.

Izbicki, Joanne. "The Shape of Freedom: The Female Body in Post-Surrender Japanese Cinema." *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal. English Supplement*, no. 12, 1997, pp. 109–53.

"Joseika Suru Otokotachi [Men Becoming Feminine]." *Sunday Mainichi*, vol. 37, no. 17, 27 Apr. 1958, pp. 20–23.

Kamiya, Makiko. "Senryōki 'Panpan Eiga' no Politics: 1948-Nen no Kikaishikake no Kami [Politics of 'Panpan Films' during the Occupation: The Deus Ex Machina of 1948]." *Senryōka no Eiga: Kaihō to Ken'etsu* [*Films during the Occupation: Liberation and Censorship*], edited by Kenji Iwamoto, Shinwa-sha, 2009, pp. 151–86.

Kanno, Yuka. *Queer Cinema: Sekai to Jikan ni Betsu no Shikata de Sonzaisuru Tameni* [*Queer Cinema: To Exist in a Different Way from the World and Time*]. Film Art, 2023.

Karlin, Jason G. "The Gender of Nationalism: Competing Masculinities in Meiji Japan." *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2002, pp. 41–77.

Kasahara, Kazuo. *Hametsu no Bigaku: Yakuza Eiga he no Requiem* [*Aesthetics of Destruction: Requiem for the Yakuza Film*]. Chikuma-shobō, 2004.

Kato, Kenta. "A Man with Whom Men Fall in Love: Homosociality and Effeminophobia in the *Abashiri Bangai-Chi* Series." *Japanese Studies*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2021, pp. 59–71.

---. “Kissing off the Defeat: Cross-Dressing as the Japanese Postwar Condition in *Oitsu Owaretsu*.” *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 68, no. 11, 2021, pp. 1860–76.

Katō, Masahiro. *Haisen to Akasen: Kokusaku Baishun no Jidai* [*Defeat and Red-Light District: The Era of State-Sponsored Prostitution*]. Kōbun-sha, 2009.

Kessler, Suzanne J., and Wendy McKenna. *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach*. University of Chicago Press, 1985.

kihachi: Four Beat no Artisan: Okamoto Kihachi Zen Sakuhinshū [*kihachi: The Artisan of the Four-beat: Complete Collection of Okamoto Kihachi's Works*]. Tōhō Shuppan Jigyōshitsu, 1992.

Kinoshita, Chika. *Mizoguchi Kenji Ron: Eiga no Bigaku to Seijigaku* [*A Review of Mizoguchi Kenji: Aesthetics and Politics of the Film Medium*]. Hōsei University Press, 2016.

Kinsui, Satoshi. *Virtual Japanese: Enigmas of Role Language*. Osaka University Press, 2017.

Kitamura, Hiroshi. *Screening Enlightenment: Hollywood and the Cultural Reconstruction of Defeated Japan*. Cornell University Press, 2010.

Kitamura, Kyōhei. *Star Joyū no Bunkashakaigaku: Sengo Nihon ga Yokubō shita Seijo to Majo* [*Cultural Sociology of Star Actress: A Saint and a Witch Desired by Post-war Japan*]. Sakuhin-sha, 2017.

Kōno, Marie. *Nihon no “Melodrama” Eiga: Satsueijo Jidai no Genre to Sakuhin* [*Japanese “Melodrama” Films: Genres and Films of the Studio Era*]. Shinwa-sha, 2021.

Kosuge, Haruo. “*Kirai Kirai Kirai* [*I Hate You, I Hate You, I Hate You*].” *Kinema Junpō*, vol. 1071, no. 256, Apr. 1960, p. 89.

Kovner, Sarah. *Occupying Power: Sex Workers and Servicemen in Postwar Japan*. Stanford University Press, 2012.

Kramm, Robert. *Sanitized Sex: Regulating Prostitution, Venereal Disease, and Intimacy in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952*. Univ of California Press, 2017.

Ku, Mina. *Tokai Kigeki to Sengo Minshushugi: Senryōki no Nihon Eiga niokeru Wasei Romantic Comedy* [*Urban Comedy and Postwar Democracy: Japanese Romantic Comedy during the Occupation Period*]. Suisei-sha, 2021.

Kubo, Yutaka. “Nikkatsu Roman Porno no Hattenshi: ‘Futsū de Wa Nai’ to Sareru Otokotachi no Bokki [The History of Nikkatsu Roman Porn: Erections of Men Considered ‘Abnormal’].” *Nikkatsu Roman Porno: Sei no Bigaku to Seijigaku* [*Nikkatsu Roman Porn: Aesthetics and Politics of Sexuality*], edited by Miyoko Shimura et al., Suisei-sha, 2023, pp. 175–97.

---. "'Shibu-Jii' ga Egaku Josei no Oi: *Mozu* no Awashima Chikage o Daihyō-Rei Ni [Depiction of Women's Aging through 'Shibu-Jii': Using Awashima Chikage in *Mozu* as a Representative Example]." *Shibuya Minoru: Kyoshō ni shite Itan* [*Shibuya Minoru: A Master and Maverick*], edited by Miyoko Shimura and Yoshinobu Tsunoo, Suisei-sha, 2020, pp. 275–301.

---. *Yūyake Kumo no Kanata Ni: Kinoshita Keisuke to Queer na Kansei* [*Over the Evening Clouds: Kinoshita Keisuke and Queer Sensibility*]. Nakanishiya, 2022.

Kuwahara, I'etoshi. *Kirareta Waisetsu: Eirin Cut-shi* [*Censored Obscenity: A History of Film Regulations by Eiren*]. Yomiuri Shimbun-sha, 1993.

Leitch, Thomas. *Crime Films*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Lugowski, David M. "Queering the (New) Deal: Lesbian and Gay Representation and the Depression-Era Cultural Politics of Hollywood's Production Code." *Cinema Journal*, vol. 38, no. 2, 1999, pp. 3–35.

Lunsing, Wim. "The Politics of *Okama* and *Onabe*: Uses and Abuses of Terminology Regarding Homosexuality and Transgender." *Genders, Transgenders and Sexualities in Japan*, edited by Mark McLelland and Romit Dasgupta, Routledge, 2005, pp. 81–95.

Mabuchi, Kōsuke. *'Zoku'-tachi no Sengoshi* [*Post-War History of 'Tribes'*]. Sanseidō, 1989.

Mackie, Vera. "Modern Selves and Modern Spaces: An Overview." *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s*, edited by Elise K. Tipton and John Clark, University of Hawaii Press, 2000, pp. 185–99.

---. "Sōshukoku no Manazashi: Shikaku Bunka ni Mirareru Modern Girl [Gaze of the Metropole: The Modern Girl Seen in Visual Culture]." *Modern Girl to Shokuminchiteki Kindai: Higashi Asia niokeru Teikoku Shihon Gender* [*The Modern Girl and Colonial Modernity: Empire, Capital, and Gender in East Asia*], edited by Ruri Itō et al., translated by Katsuhiko Suganuma, Iwanami-shoten, 2010, pp. 91–116.

Maree, Claire. "Grrrl-Queens: Onê-Kotoba and the Negotiation of Heterosexist Gender Norms and Lesbo(Homo)Phobic Stereotypes in Japanese." *AsiaPacifiQueer: Rethinking Genders and Sexualities*, edited by Fran Martin et al., University of Illinois Press, 2008, pp. 67–84.

---. *queerqueen: Linguistic Excess in Japanese Media*. eBook, Oxford University Press, 2020.

Marran, Christine L. *Poison Woman: Figuring Female Transgression in Modern Japanese Culture*. University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

"Maruyama Akihiro to Wa Donna Otoko? [What Kind of Man Is Maruyama Akihiro?]." *Music Life*, vol. 7, no. 8, Aug. 1957, pp. 15–17.

Marx, Karl. *Capital, Volume I*. eBook, Electric Book Company, 2000.

Matsuda, Saori. "Shō Kaisetsu [Chapter Introduction]." *Senryōki Seikatsu Sesōshi Siryō II: Fūzoku to Ryūkō* [*A Collection of Lifestyle Magazine Articles during the Occupation Period II: Manners and Fashion*], edited by Yoshikazu Nagai and Saori Matsuda, Shinyō-sha, 2015, pp. 18–28.

Mavor, Carol. *Reading Boyishly: Roland Barthes, J. M. Barrie, Jacques Henri Lartigue, Marcel Proust, and D. W. Winnicott*. Duke University Press, 2007.

McDonald, Keiko Iwai. "The *Yakuza* Film: An Introduction." *Reframing Japanese Cinema: Authorship, Genre, History*, edited by Arthur Nolletti Jr. and David Desser, Indiana University Press, 1992, pp. 165–92.

McLelland, Mark. *Love, Sex, and Democracy in Japan during the American Occupation*. Springer, 2012.

---. *Queer Japan from the Pacific War to the Internet Age*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

Mitsuhashi, Junko. "Gay Boy, Sisterboy, Blue Boy." *Sei no Yōgoshū* [*Glossary of Sexual Terminology*], edited by Shōichi Inoue and Kansai Seiyoku Kenkyūkai, Kōdan-sha, 2004, pp. 313–23.

---. "Miwa Akihiro to Josō [Miwa Akihiro and Cross-Dressing]." *Miwa Akihiro toiu Ikikata* [*Way of Life Called Miwa Akihiro*], Seikyū-sha, 2000, pp. 205–27.

---. *Shinjuku: "Sei naru Machi" no Rekishi Chiri* [*Shinjuku: History and Geography of the 'City of Sexuality'*]. Asahi Shimbun Shuppan, 2018.

Minami, Hiroshi. "Masu Komi Style [Mass Communication Style]." *Shūkan Asahi*, vol. 62, no. 54, 29 Dec. 1957, p. 8.

Minami, Takao. "Danshō ni Kansuru Ni San no Seishinigaku-Teki Kōsatsu [A Few Psychiatric Considerations on Male Prostitutes]." *Senryōki Seikatsu Sesōshi Siryō II: Fūzoku to Ryūkō* [*A Collection of Lifestyle Magazine Articles during the Occupation Period II: Manners and Fashion*], edited by Yoshikazu Nagai and Saori Matsuda, Shinyō-sha, 2015, pp. 65–75.

Mishima, Yukio. *Mishima Yukio Eigaron Shūsei* [*Collected Film Essays by Mishima Yukio*]. Waizu Shuppan, 1999.

Miyoshi, Masao. *Off Center: Power and Culture Relations Between Japan and the United States*. Harvard University Press, 1991.

Modleski, Tania. "Time and Desire in the Woman's Film." *Home Is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, edited by Christine Gledhill, BFI Pub., 1987, pp. 326–38.

Molasky, Michael S. *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory*. Routledge, 1999.

Mosse, George L. *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*. Oxford University Press, 1998.

Mukai, Hiro'o. "Tasogare no Gay Boy: America, Igirisu no Dōseiai [Twilight Gay Boys: Homosexuality in America and Britain]." *Bungeishunjū*, vol. 36, no. 9, Aug. 1958, pp. 94–97.

Muto, Ichiyo, and Reiko Inoue. "Beyond the New Left (Part 2): In Search of a Radical Base in Japan." *AMPO: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review*, vol. 17, no. 3, 1985, pp. 54–73.

"MW Kyōsitsu [A MW Classroom]." *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 12 July 1955, p. 7.

Nakamura, Hideyuki. *Haisha no Miburi: Post-senryōki no Nihon Eiga* [*Gestures of the Defeated: Japanese Films in the Post-Occupation Period*]. Iwanami-shoten, 2014.

---. *Sengo Eirin Kankei Shiryōshū: Bessatsu* [*A Collection of Post-war Eiren Related Documents: A Supplement Volume*]. Kress Shuppan, 2021.

Naremore, James. *Acting in the Cinema*. University of California Press, 1990.

Neale, Steve. "Masculinity as Spectacle." *Screen*, vol. 24, no. 6, Jan. 1983, pp. 2–17.

Neale, Steve, and Frank Krutnik. *Popular Film and Television Comedy*. Routledge, 2006.

Nishino, Atsushi. "Nihon niokeru Weininger Juyō: Akutagawa Ryūnosuke Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Sakuhin o Chūshin Ni [A Focus on the Embrace of Otto Weininger in Japan: Literary works of Akutagawa Ryunosuke and Tanizaki Junichiro]." *Gakujutsu Kenkyū*, vol. 60, Feb. 2012, pp. 21–36.

Nishiwaki, Hideo. *Outlaw no Banka: Tasogare ni B-Kyū Eiga wo Miteta* [*Elegy of Outlaw: Watching B-Movie in the Twilight*]. Shirakawa Shoin, 1976.

"*Ocha to Dōjō* [*Tea and Sympathy*]." *Kyōiku Hyōron*, vol. 6, no. 3, Mar. 1957, p. 85.

"*Ocha to Dōjō* to Deborah Kerr [*Tea and Sympathy* and Deborah Kerr]." *Eiga Geijutsu*, vol. 5, no. 3, Mar. 1957, p. 63.

Ōsawa, Masachi. *Sengo no Shisō Kūkan* [*Post-war Intellectual Landscape*]. Chikuma-shobō, 1998.

Oshima, Nagisa. *Cinema, Censorship, and the State: The Writings of Nagisa Oshima, 1956-1978*. Translated by Dawn Lawson, MIT Press, 1993.

Ōya, Sōichi. *Mu Shisōjin Sengen* [*Declaration of the Unthinking Person*]. Masu Shobō, 1956.

Ozaki, Hirotsugu. "*Ocha to Dōjō* [*Tea and Sympathy*]." *Eiga Geijutsu*, vol. 5, no. 4, Apr. 1957, pp. 58–59.

Peng, Hsiao-yen. *Dandyism and Transcultural Modernity: The Dandy, the Flâneur, and*

the Translator in 1930s Shanghai, Tokyo, and Paris. Routledge, 2010.

Pflugfelder, Gregory M. *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600–1950*. University of California Press, 2007.

Pharr, Susan J. "The Politics of Women's Rights." *Democratizing Japan*, edited by Robert E Ward and Sakamoto Yoshikazu, University of Hawaii Press, 1987, pp. 218–50.

Plantinga, Carl. *Moving Viewers: American Film and the Spectator's Experience*. University of California Press, 2009.

Potter, Susan. *Queer Timing: The Emergence of Lesbian Sexuality in Early Cinema*. eBook, University of Illinois Press, 2019.

Raine, Michael. "Ishihara Yūjirō: Youth, Celebrity, and the Male Body in Late-1950s Japan." *Word and Image in Japanese Cinema*, edited by Dennis Washburn and Carole Cavanaugh, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 202–25.

Richardson, Niall. *The Queer Cinema of Derek Jarman: Critical and Cultural Readings*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2009.

Ross, Marlon B. *Sissy Insurgencies: A Racial Anatomy of Unfit Manliness*. Duke University Press, 2022.

Russell, Catherine. *The Cinema of Naruse Mikio: Women and Japanese Modernity*. Duke University Press, 2008.

Russo, Vito. *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies*. Harper & Row, 1987.

Saitō, Ayako. "50-nendai Eiga to Ishihara Shintarō [1950s Films and Ishihara Shintarō]." *Bungaku*, vol. 5, no. 6, 2004, pp. 76–90.

---. "Hibotan Oryū Ron [An Essay on Hibotan Oryu]." *Tatakau Onna-Tachi: Nihon Eiga no Josei Action* [*Female Fighters: Female Action in Japanese Cinema*], edited by Inuhiko Yomota and Hana Washitani, Sakuhin-sha, 2009, pp. 84–149.

---. "Takakura Ken no Aimai na Nikutai [Takakura Ken's Ambiguous Body]." *Otoko-Tachi no Kizuna, Asia Eiga: Homosocial na Yokubō* [*The Bond of Men, Asian Films: Homosocial Desire*], edited by Inuhiko Yomota and Ayako Saitō, Heibon-sha, 2004, pp. 63–120.

---. "Ushinawareta Phallus wo Motomete: Kinoshita Keisuke 'Namida No Sanbusaku' Saikō [In Search of Lost Phallus: Revisiting Kinoshita Keisuke's 'Trilogy of Tears']." *Eiga no Seijigaku* [*The Political Studies of Cinema*], edited by Masato Hase and Hideyuki Nakamura, Seikyū-sha, 2003, pp. 61–117.

Sano, Shin'ichi. *Kaiyūden: Mikuni Rentarō Shinu made Enjitsuzukeru Koto* [*Biography of a Monstrous Actor: Mikuni Rentarō, Acting until You Die*]. Kōdan-sha, 2011.

Sato, Barbara. *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan*. Duke University Press, 2003.

Satō, Tadao. “Eiga to Dōseiai-Teki Hyōgen [Film and Homosexual Expression].” *Eureka*, vol. 6, no. 13, 1974, pp. 54–57.

---. *Nihon Eiga-Shi Dai 3-kan: 1960-1995* [*Japanese Film History 3: 1960-1995*]. Iwanami Shoten, 1995.

---. “*Otokorashisa” no Shinwa* [*The Myth of “Masculinity”*]. Tōyō Keizai Shinpō-sha, 1980.

Schilling, Mark. *The Yakuza Movie Book: A Guide to Japanese Gangster Films*. Stone Bridge Press, 2003.

Schrader, Paul. “Yakuza-Eiga: A Primer.” *Film Comment*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1974, pp. 8–17.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. Columbia University Press, 2015.

---. *Epistemology of the Closet*. University of California Press, 2008.

---. “How to Bring Your Kids up Gay.” *Social Text*, no. 29, 1991, pp. 18–27.

“*Seishun Kaidan* April 5 Advertisement.” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 5 Apr. 1955, p. 4.

“*Seishun Kaidan* April 17 Advertisement.” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 17 Apr. 1955, p. 4.

Sengoopta, Chandak. *Otto Weininger: Sex, Science, and Self in Imperial Vienna*. University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Shiba, Tsukasa, and Sakae Aoyama. *Yakuza Eiga to Sono Jidai* [*The Yakuza Film and Its Period*]. Chikuma-shobō, 1998.

Shimizu, Kazuhiko. “‘Mohaya Sengo de wa Nai’ toiu Shakaiteki Kioku no Kōsei Katei [The Process of Constructing Social Memory of ‘It Is No Longer the Post-war’].” *Bulletin of Edogawa University*, vol. 25, Mar. 2015, pp. 195–206.

“Shin Ryūkōgo ‘Ocha to Dōjō’ Zoku [New Buzzword ‘Tea and Sympathy’ Tribe].” *Shūkan Shinchō*, vol. 24, no. 24, 23 July 1956, p. 11.

Shin Sekai Geinōsha. *Ocha to Dōjō* [*Tea and Sympathy*]. 1957.

Shinada, Yūkichi. “*Ocha to Dōjō* [*Tea and Sympathy*].” *Eiga Hyōron*, vol. 14, no. 3, Mar. 1957, pp. 92–93.

Shishi, Bunroku. *Seishun Kaidan* [*Ghost Story of Youth*]. Chikuma-shobō, 2017.

Shundō, Kōji, and Sadao Yamane. *Ninkyō Eiga Den* [*A Legend of Ninkyo Films*]. Kōdan-sha, 1999.

Silverman, Kaja. *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*. Routledge, 1992.

Simmons, Jerold. “The PRODUCTION CODE Under New Management: Geoffrey Shurlock, *The Bad Seed*, and *Tea and Sympathy*.” *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol. 22, no. 1, Jan. 1994, pp. 2–10.

Sinfield, Alan. *Cultural Politics: Queer Reading*. Routledge, 2013.

---. *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde, and the Queer Moment*. Columbia

University Press, 1994.
"Sisutā Bōi." *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten*, 2nd ed., Japan Knowledge, 2007.
"Skirt o Haita Otokotachi [Men Wearing Skirts]." *Shūkan Asahi Geinō*, no. 577, 21 July 1957, pp. 9–17.
Slaymaker, Douglas. *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction*. Routledge, 2004.
Smulyan, Susan. "Using Hollywood Films to Teach Democracy: SCAP Film Policy in Occupied Japan." *Pacific and American Studies*, vol. 7, Mar. 2007, pp. 50–61.
Standish, Isolde. *A New History of Japanese Cinema: A Century of Narrative Film*. Continuum, 2005.
---. "Genre and Gender: Romantic Friendships and the Homosocial Imperative in the Ninkyō (Chivalrous) Genre Film." *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, edited by Jennifer Coates et al., Routledge, 2020, pp. 382–90.
---. *Myth and Masculinity in the Japanese Cinema: Towards a Political Reading of the "Tragic Hero."* Curzon, 2000.
Steuer, Daniel. "A Book That Won't Go Away: Otto Weininger's 'Sex and Character.'" *Sex and Character: An Investigation of Fundamental Principles*, edited by Daniel Steuer and Laura Marcus, Indiana University Press, 2005, pp. xi–xlvi.
Suganuma, Katsuhiko. *Contact Moments: The Politics of Intercultural Desire in Japanese Male-Queer Cultures*. Hong Kong University Press, 2012.
Sumi, Tatsuya. *Danshō no Mori* [*Grove of Male Prostitutes*]. Hibiya-shuppansha, 1949.
Suzuki, Seijun, et al. *Seijun Eiga* [*Seijun Film*]. Waizu Shuppan, 2006.
Tayama, Rikiya. "*Abashiri Bangai-Chi*: Nagare-Mono no Elegy [*Abashiri Bangai-Chi*: Outlaw's Elegy]." *Scenario*, vol. 22, no. 10, Oct. 1966, pp. 134–37.
---. "*Shirosen Himitsu Chitai* [*Secret White Line Zone*]." *Kinema Junpō*, vol. 219, no. 1023, Dec. 1958, p. 74.
Tazoe, Kazuyuki. "Onna to Otoko no Zero-nen: 'Jiyū Gakkō' Toiu Sengo [Year Zero for Women and Men: The Post-War as 'School of Freedom']." *Senryōka no Eiga: Kaihō to Ken'etsu* [*Films during the Occupation: Liberation and Censorship*], edited by Kenji Iwamoto, Shinwa-sha, 2009, pp. 187–218.
Thomas, Harry, Jr. *Sissy!: The Effeminate Paradox in Postwar US Literature and Culture*. University of Alabama Press, 2017.
Tomita, Eizō. *Gay*. Tokyo Shobō, 1958.
Toyoda, Masayoshi. *Aura no Sugao: Miwa Akihiro no Ikikata* [*The True Face of Aura: The Life of Miwa Akihiro*]. Kōdan-sha, 2009.
Treglia, Laura. "Yakuza no Onnatachi: Women in Japanese Gangster Cinema." *A Companion to the Gangster Film*, edited by George S. Larke-Walsh, Wiley

Blackwell, 2019, pp. 377–94.

Tsunoo, Yoshinobu. “Heimen ni Nekorobu toiu Kiroku no Shikata: ‘Fūzoku Eiga’ toshite no Shibuya Minoru *Jiyū Gakkō* to ‘Kyodatsu Jōtai’ no Ryōgisei [Lying on a Flat Plane as a Method to Recording: Minoru Shibuya’s ‘Film of Manners,’ *School of Liberty*, and ‘Despondency’ after the Japanese Defeat].” *Eizōgaku*, vol. 101, Jan. 2019, pp. 92–113.

Tsurumi, Shunsuke. “Būmu Būmu [Boom Boom].” *Tsurumi Shunsuke Shū Zoku 1: Atarashii Kaikoku* [*The Collected Works of Tsurumi Shunsuke, Part 2 Vol. 1: New Opening of Japan*], Chikuma-shobō, 2000, pp. 250–99.

Tyler, Parker. *Screening The Sexes: Homosexuality in the Movies*. Da Capo Press, 1993.

Usui, Michiko. “Suppun Eiga no Susume: Senryō-ka deno Mosaku [Encouraging Kissing Films: Searching under the Occupation].” *Senryōka no Eiga: Kaihō to Ken’etsu* [*Films during the Occupation: Liberation and Censorship*], edited by Kenji Iwamoto, Shinwa-sha, 2009, pp. 63–90.

Vick, Tom. *Time and Place Are Nonsense: The Films of Seijun Suzuki*. Smithsonian Institution, 2015.

“‘W + M’ Jidai [The Age of ‘W + M’].” *Shūkan Asahi*, 8 May 1955, pp. 3–11.

Warhol, Robyn R. *Having a Good Cry: Effeminate Feelings and Pop-Culture Forms*. Ohio State University Press, 2003.

Washio, Saburō. *Jigoku No Passport* [*Passport to Hell*]. Kōfūsha, 1958.

Watanabe, Takenobu. *Hero no Yume to Shi: Eiga-Teki Kairaku no Yukue* [*Hero’s Dream and Death: Whereabouts of Cinematic Pleasure*]. Shichō-sha, 1972.

---. *Nikkatsu Action no Kareina Sekai: 1954-1971* [*The Splendid World of Nikkatsu Action: 1954-1971*]. Mirai-sha, 2004.

Weinbaum, Alys Eve and Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, editors. *The Modern Girl around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization*. Duke University Press, 2008.

Weininger, Otto. *Sex and Character: An Investigation of Fundamental Principles*. Translated by Ladislaus Löb, Indiana University Press, 2005.

Weiss, Andrea. *Vampires & Violets: Lesbians in Film*. Penguin Books, 1993.

Yagisawa, Taketaka. Screenplay of *Taifū Musuko*.

Yajima, Midori. *Deai no Enkinhō: Watashi no Eigaron* [*The Perspective of Encounters: My Film Theory*]. Ushio Publishing, 1979.

Yoshida, Kenkichi. *Josei no Fūzoku* [*Customs of Women*]. Kawade Shobō, 1955.

Yoshimi, Shunya. *Shinbei to Hanbei: Sengo Nihon no Seijiteki Muishiki* [*Pro-America and Anti-America: The Political Unconscious of Postwar Japan*]. Iwanami-shoten,

2007.
---. “Teito to Modern Girl: Ryō Taisenkanki Niokeru ‘Kindai’ to ‘Sei’ no Kūkan Seiji [Imperial Capital and the Modern Girl: Spatial Politics of ‘Modern’ and ‘Sexuality’ in the Interwar Period].” *Nichijō Seikatsu no Tanjō: Senkanki Nihon no Bunka Hen’yō* [*The Birth of Everyday Life: Cultural Transformation in Interwar Japan*], edited by Barbara Sato, Kashiwa-shobō, 2007, pp. 228–50.
Yoshimoto, Mitsuhiro. *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema*. Duke University Press, 2000.
---. *Logic of Sentiment: The Postwar Japanese Cinema and Questions of Modernity*. 1993. University of California, San Diego, PhD dissertation.
---. “Melodrama, Postmodernism, and Japanese Cinema.” *Melodrama and Asian Cinema*, edited by Wimal Dissanayake, Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 101–26.
Žižek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. Verso, 2008.