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Note on Japanese Names

For Japanese names, in accordance with Japanese convention, I put family names first followed by given names, except Japanese authors who have published in English.

Introduction

The “Vulgar” Television Controversy

In April 1969, Japanese TV viewers were baffled by an NTV (Nippon TV) variety show, *Konto gojyūgo-go no urabangumi wo buttobase!* (Konto 55’s Down with Other Programs!) This primetime TV show, hosted by Hagimoto Kin’ichi and Sakagami Jirō, a comedy duo named *Konto gojyūgo-go*, featured a “rock-paper-scissors” striptease in which invited female guests played a “rock-paper-scissors” with the hosts and a loser of each round would have to remove one piece of clothing from him- or herself. The clothes would then be put up for the on-site auction in which the studio audience including children could participate.¹ Many TV viewers were appalled by the sight of the female guests, usually a media celebrity such as an actress or a singer, nearly naked on stage as children in the audience rejoiced after purchasing an undergarment at the auction.

This TV revelry prompted surge of criticism. A TV watchdog organization, Japan Television Audience Conference (Nihon Shichōsha Kaigi), in its list of the “five worst television programs,” awarded the show first place.² Municipal governments in Sagamihara City, Fujisawa City and Hachiōji City refused the program’s request to use their civic centers for the filming of the show due to its “vulgarity.”³ In support of the Sagamihara City’s refusal, a viewer argued that the freedom of expression should not be allowed without discretion and broadcasters must act

¹ A few episodes of this show are available for viewing at the Broadcast Library, Yokohama, Japan.

² Nakamura Shōichi et al., *Terebi bangumiron: miru taiken no shakai shinrishi* (Osaka: Yomiuri Terebi Hōsō, 1972), 213.

³ “Teizoku bangumi buttobase: kaijō shiyō okotowari Sagamihara shimin kaikan,” *Asahi shinbun*, September 7, 1969, 5; “Hachiōji shi mo mono ii: ‘urabangumi...’ kōkai rokuga,” *Asahi shinbun*, September 10, 1969, 14; “Fujisawa shimin kaikan mo kotowaru: ‘urabangumi...’ kōkai shūroku,” *Asahi shinbun*, September 12, 1969, 10.

according to common sense and social standards.⁴ Faced with such a strong opposition, the “rock-paper-scissors” striptease became an independent program before going off the air entirely in April 1970, on the decision of the NTV’s internal monitoring department.⁵

While this show was one of the most memorable “vulgar” TV programs in the history of Japanese television, it was certainly not the only one. In fact, the first two decades of Japanese TV broadcasting, from 1953 to 1973, witnessed several programs that were similarly criticized as “vulgar” by various audience groups. The public discussion on these programs started as early as in 1957 when a renowned journalist and social intellectual Ōya Sōichi famously complained that the current state of Japanese television was turning the whole country into “a nation of a 100 million idiots” (*ichioku sōhakuchika*).⁶ His ire was raised by an episode of an NTV variety show *Nandemo yarima-show* (The Let’s Do Anything Show), in which one of the viewers was awarded cash prize for making a big fuss during the Tokyo 6-University Baseball League by waving a Keiō University flag in the Waseda University cheering section.⁷ Echoing the condemnation of this and other TV programs, several groups and many individuals would express concerns about the future of TV broadcasting in Japan over the next decade. Intellectuals attacked those programs for their lack of seriousness and educational value. PTA groups and educators worried about the influence on children. These criticisms were mediated by the press, which felt that the growing popularity of TV broadcasting was undermining the position of the print media. Government officials and the business community also took up the call for

⁴ “Terebi bangumi ni fūkaku wo,” *Asahi shinbun*, September 11, 1969, 5.

⁵ Nihon Hōsō Rengōkai ed., *Yori yoi hōsō no tame ni: hōsō bangumi kōjō iinkai hōkoku 70* (Tokyo: hōsō bangumi kōjō iinkai, 1970), 30-31.

⁶ Jayson Makoto Chun, “*A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots*”?: *a Social History of Japanese Television, 1953-1973* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 164.

⁷ It turned out the brave person was actually an actor who had been hired by the show. See Satō Takumi, *Terebiteki kyōyō: ichioku sōhakuchika e no keifu* (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2008), 109.

eliminating “vulgarity” from television.

While many groups were involved in blasting “vulgar” TV programs, no one clearly delineated what constituted as “vulgar” in assessing TV programs.⁸ We can only reconstitute the conception of “vulgar” by empirically examining *ex post facto* the programs that the criticisms targeted. However, it is also true that each commentator had a different set of “vulgar” programs in mind in this discussion, which seldom offered a cohesive or systematic conception of the “vulgar.” In general, serial dramas and entertainment shows with scenes of violence and sexuality were subjected to criticism due to their purportedly harmful effect on children. Variety shows, quiz shows and amateur talent shows featuring grotesque performances or very large sums of prize money were also targets of the attack. However, even programs like *Tetsuwan atomu* (Astro Boy), a legendary animation that became enormously famous even outside Japan, were also at times labeled “vulgar” when controversy over TV ran particularly hot.⁹ Such discordance signified the fact that there were different ideas of what a “proper” TV program was and, by extension, how to build TV broadcasting that would help Japanese society move forward.

Indeed, the criticism of the “vulgar” TV shows reflected various ideals about television as a mass media. It involved a question of what kind of role this rising popular visual media should perform in a society where struggles over democracy, economic equality, education and the peace movement flared up regularly. Therefore, different solutions to the “vulgar” TV problem suggested by various social groups indicate competing perceptions on Japan’s sovereignty and the proper parameters of democracy in the country.

In this context, this dissertation writes a history of early Japanese television through the lens

⁸ Shiga Nobuo, “Shiryō: Nihon teizoku bangumi ronsōshi,” *YTV Report* 82 (1972): 115.

⁹ Matsuda Hiroshi, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 2* (Zushi: Sōshisha, 1981), 285.

of the “vulgar” program controversy. This debate on TV’s social role not only articulated different visions of mass media in postwar Japan but also showed an aspiration of creating culture that would uphold organizing principles of postwar mass society. Through analyzing what programs were criticized, how these programs in question were presented to the Japanese TV audience, what kind of relationship between the media and its audience was imagined, and ultimately, what kind of political and cultural vision was articulated through such intense debates, I would like to draw a picture of the relation that television created to the larger postwar Japanese society.

The “vulgar” TV programs debate has been dealt with by many scholars, mainly with a focus on the issues of commercialism and fierce competition between TV stations, and political interventions of the Japanese government. Jayson Makoto Chun, in his comprehensive study of the history of Japanese television, discusses this issue in the context of the competitive nature of the broadcasting industry, where multiple commercial broadcasters fought for survival on the basis of ratings, which were directly linked to the revenue of each station. In order to obtain as many viewers as possible, the commercial TV broadcasters resorted to the “lowest common denominator,” catering to the cultural taste of the largest possible audience.¹⁰

On the other hand, scholars also point out that there was a political implication behind this social discourse around television. In discussing the history of the “vulgar” TV programs, Shiga Nobuo argues that the intense journalistic discourse on the “vulgar” television in the first half of the 1960s was due to the government’s intention to stir up public opinion regarding the revision of the Broadcast Law, so that the state could justify exerting greater control over the media.¹¹

¹⁰ Chun, “*A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots*”? 158-159, 200.

¹¹ Shiga, “Nihon teizoku bangumi ronsōshi,” 115.

Matsuda Hiroshi agrees that the Japanese government's emphasis on TV's impact on the youth reflected its desire to control TV broadcasting and oppress the programs that did not go along with the line of governmental policies.¹² At the same time, the "vulgar" programs debate was also a major topic of discussion among intellectuals, who were some of the strongest voices against the "vulgar" programs. Satō Takumi, in his discussion of Japanese educational television, argued that the opposition to the "vulgar" television was tantamount to an identification of a serious intellectual who attacked the imperialistic impulses within the imported low-brow popular culture from the United States. These intellectuals, both leftists and conservatives, believed that television, along with other influential mass media, must serve as an educational media, and condemned the "vulgar" programs for betraying such wholesome potentialities within television. Satō drew a parallel between these intellectuals' notion of educational media and the Frankfurt School's criticism of the cultural industry, which analyzed capitalism's incessant impulse to create standardized and inartistic cultural products as one of the serious problems of modernity.¹³

In short, many groups, often with starkly different agendas, participated in the "vulgar" TV controversy. While parents worried that their children might turn to delinquency due to the influence of violent scenes in TV shows, and intellectuals were anxious about the tendency of TV programs to give the audience nothing to think seriously about, government officials found in this debate an opportunity to intervene in broadcasting that had not quite operated in alignment with what the Japanese bureaucracy wanted. At the center of the debate on televisual "vulgarity," then, lay the state's desire to control the rising popular media that was rapidly penetrating

¹² Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 2*, 284.

¹³ Satō, *Terebiteki kyōyō*, 102, 111-116.

people's daily life. Chun is correct to point out that Japanese commercial TV was in this period an expanding and dynamic market, in which stations vigorously pursued high ratings, often at the expense of the quality of programs. However, these studies fail to discuss what these programs actually were: how these problematic programs were produced, what kind of contents these programs delivered to the audience, and most importantly, what kind of social values these programs articulated. Without focusing on these aspects of the controversy, previous research on the “vulgar” programs debate tend to describe the contested programs in a negative light and thus, wittingly or not, take for granted the assumptions of the TV critics in this period. In this dissertation, I argue that these programs did not just feature cheap amusement and visual stimulation in order to grasp the attention of the viewers. Rather, when viewed in the cultural context of the early postwar, these programs generated cultural values that cannot be dismissed as “vulgar.”

Studies on Japanese Television

The history of Japanese television, despite its cultural and political significance in the postwar Japanese history, has not received enough scholarly attention. The majority of the historical studies on Japanese television have been done in the form of broadcasting history stretching back to the beginning of radio broadcasting in 1925.¹⁴ These works give readers a

¹⁴ Nihon Minkan Hōsō Renmei, *Minkan hōsō jūnenishi* (Tokyo: Nihon Minkan Hōsō Renmei, 1961); Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai Hōsōshi Henshūshitsu, *Nihon hōsōshi* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1965); Fujita Keiichi, *Sugao no hōsōshi* (Tokyo: Shin Nihon Shuppansha, 1969); Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Hōsō 50-nenshi* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1977); Matsuda Hiroshi, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 1* (Zushi: Sōshisha, 1980); Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 2*; Hidaka Ichirō, *Nihon no hōsō no ayumi* (Tokyo: Ningen no Kagakusha, 1991); Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō* (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2001); Nihon Minkan Hōsō Renmei, *Minkan hōsō 50-nenshi* (Tokyo: Nihon Minkan Hōsō Renmei, 2001); NHK Sōgō Hōsō Bunka Kenkyūjo, *50 Years of Japanese Broadcasting* (Tokyo: NHK, 1977); Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Broadcasting in Japan: the Twentieth Century Journey from Radio to Multimedia* (Tokyo: NHK, 2002); Oda Sadao, *Hōsō no 20-seiki: rajio kara terebi, soshite ta-media e* (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2002); Ōyama Katsumi, *Shisetsu hōsōshi: kyodai media no ishizue o kizuuta hito to jyōnetsu*

comprehensive look at the development of Japanese television in the larger historical, political and cultural context of the broadcasting and, in particular, clarify TV's relations to radio.

In the meantime, pioneering scholars have separated the history of Japanese television from that of radio.¹⁵ However, even these historical accounts of Japanese television broadcasting, specifically, mostly focus on institutional and technological development of the media and important political and cultural events that determined this popular media's destiny in society. TV culture in Japan came into its own in the course of historically significant moments of postwar Japan, such as the imperial wedding in 1959, the Anti-Security Treaty protest in 1960, the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, and so on. Previous scholarly efforts illustrates how the televised broadcasting of these events marked the rise of a new visual culture in which national politics and cultures were mediated on a real-time basis, contributing to the formation of a "national community." However, this emphasis on TV's presence in national events and on the power of television to create a sense of national togetherness inevitably leads us to neglect the fact that television was also embedded in Japanese everyday life. Daily and weekly features from newscasts to serial dramas and entertainment shows played a no less important role in ordinary TV viewers' experience.

Although other works have focused on Japanese TV programs,¹⁶ they mainly deal with

(Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2007)

¹⁵ Shiga Nobuo, *Terebi shakaishi* (Tokyo: Seibundō Shinkōsha, 1969); Shiga Nobuo, *Shōwa terebi hōsōshi-jō* (Tōkyō: Hayakawa Shobō, 1990); Shiga Nobuo, *Shōwa terebi hōsōshi-ge* (Tōkyō: Hayakawa Shobō, 1990); Andrew A. Painter, "The creation of Japanese Television and Culture" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1991); Iyoda Yasuhiro, *Terebishi handobukku* (Tokyo: Jiyū Kokuminsha, 1996); Yoshimi Shunya, "Television and Nationalism: Historical Change in the National Domestic TV Formation of Post-war Japan," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 6:4 (2003); Kōgo Eiki, "Kōdo keizai seicho to media: Terebi no kakudai" in Arima Teruo and Takeyama Akiko ed., *Media shi wo manabu hito no tame ni* (Kyoto: Sekai Shisōsha, 2004); Chun, "A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots"?; Satō, *Terebiteki kyōyō*.

¹⁶ Yomiuri Shinbunsha Geinōbu, *Terebi bangumi no 40-nen* (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 1994); Shiga Nobuo, *Terebi bangumi kotohajime: sōseiki no terebi bangumi 25-nenshi* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2008); Setogawa Sōta, *Natsukashi no terebi ōgon jidai: Rikidōzan, "Gekkō Kamen" kara "IIPM" made* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2012).

programs that were successful in attracting the attention of viewers, broadcasters, and journalists. In addition, these discussions on specific TV programs end in listing superficial and fragmentary information regarding the programs and stop short of an in-depth analysis of the historical background and political and cultural significance of those programs. This study seeks to fill this gap by discussing early Japanese TV programs from the perspective of how those programs in question engaged in generating and contesting various social values and ethical issues.

In this, I ground my research in the critical television studies that have understood TV programs as a site where multiple meanings emerge and contend. Informed by British cultural studies, television has been increasingly considered a multivocal media that, through various programs, generate diverse and often contradictory meanings.¹⁷ In this regard, John Hartley aptly characterizes television as a media of an “excess of meaningfulness,”¹⁸ arguing that television always produces meanings that are more than it can handle. The media of television may impose on its audiences a dominant mode of interpreting prepackaged messages; however, at the same time, the very excessiveness of TV programming tends to create multilayered texts that reward a nuanced critical approach, as audiences often find alternative meanings that do not necessarily align with culturally hegemonic values. Television scholars in this critical tradition have applied this theoretical orientation to particular TV programs in order to analyze the complex dynamics between television and its audience groups surrounding how to interpret TV texts.¹⁹ Inspired by this understanding of TV programs as an open-ended text where different

¹⁷ Horace M. Newcomb, “On the Dialogic Aspects of Mass Communication,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 1:1 (1984): 40.

¹⁸ John Hartley, “Encouraging Signs, Television and the Power of Dirt, Speech and Scandalous Categories,” *Australian Journal of Cultural Studies* 1:2 (1983): 75-76.

¹⁹ David Morley, *The Nationwide Audience: Structure and Decoding* (London: British Film Institute, 1980); Dorothy Hobson, *Crossroads: the Drama of a Soap Opera* (London: Methuen, 1982); Tania Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women* (New York: Routledge, 1982); Ien Ang, *Watching Dallas: Soap*

meanings are contested by audiences' freewheeling reading,²⁰ my study on Japanese television approaches "vulgar" television programs as a battleground where various cultural and ethical impulses collided as to how to decode the contents of the programs. While dominant readings emphasized the "vulgar" aspect of the programs in question and called for reforms of TV programming, others found in the same programs a potential to activate alternative interpretations.

Television in Cold War Culture

In discussing this battle of gaining hegemony by translating and appropriating meanings created by TV programs, I focus on the Cold War in Japan as the cultural context of the "vulgar" TV debate. In the United States, with the advent of Elaine Tyler May's *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* and Alan Nadel's *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism and the Atomic Age*, studies on the history of the Cold War underwent a "cultural turn," embracing the fact that the Cold War in America was a cultural process of winning people's hearts and minds as much as it was a political and diplomatic struggle between the "free world" and communism over territory, weapons and satellites.²¹ Scholars started to discuss how Cold War policies and ideology penetrated America's everyday life and influenced people's thoughts and behavior. The early scholarship on the cultural Cold

Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination (New York: Methuen, 1985); Tania Modleski, "The Search for Tomorrow in Today's Soap Operas: Notes on a Feminine Narrative Form," *Film Quarterly* 33:1 (1979)

²⁰ These critical television study methodologies were laid out by John Fiske, *Television Culture* (New York: Methuen, 1987) and Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992)

²¹ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Post-Modernism, and the Atomic Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995). On details of the history of the Cold War study in the United States, see Steven Belletto and Daniel Grausam eds., *American Literature and Culture in an Age of Cold War: a Critical Reassessment* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012), 3-5.

War focused on the containment culture that, derived from the international and domestic containment policies that sought to limit the spread of communism, conditioned ethical values and social organization of the United States. However, more recent scholars have paid attention to the fact that the Cold War was not fought by two clear-cut enemies. It was a much more complicated political and cultural process through which multiple social groups and ideologies collided, making possible an entirely new perception of society that did not necessarily belong to either containment policies or communism. In this vein, Christina Klein clarifies, in *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961*, that in the post-colonial world, the newly independent nations, grouped as the third world, created a discourse of diversity and inclusion that articulated universality, integration, open-mindedness and cooperation as opposed to the hegemonic Cold War values of containment, exclusion and hostility.²² Thanks to the help of such discourse, Klein argues, the United States was able to establish itself as a new leader in the post-colonial world, with a stress on solidarity with the new nations.²³

Emphasis on the rising third world and its impact on the global Cold War culture was also critically discussed by Leerom Medovoi who suggests that the decolonization of the third world fit perfectly into the quest for identity in the American adolescence.²⁴ When these new nation states were founded and urged to choose between two different tracks of modernization, namely capitalism and socialism, the U.S. Cold War policy portrayed America as a champion of the non-

²² Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003)

²³ Belletto and Daniel eds., *American Literature and Culture in an Age of Cold War*, 6. This second generation of Cold War cultural studies turned its eyes from the U.S. to the global cultures that were relevant to the Cold War logics. Along with Klein's work, we can include in this category Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) and Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser eds., *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008) See Belletto and Daniel eds., *American Literature and Culture in an Age of Cold War*, 14.

²⁴ Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005)

imperial values that could accommodate the needs of the “youthful” third world states and become a role-model of their “growth” as modern nations. This Cold War ideology of integration of the third world inspired the rise of the identity culture in the United States; imagery of rebellious youth became a powerful symbol of emancipatory and resistant values that the “free world” upheld in the ideological battle with the Soviet Union. Cultural icons such as Elvis Presley, James Dean, Holden Caulfield and the beat writers emerged in the postwar United States as an epitome of the rebellious youth identity that stood in opposition to authoritarianism that the containment culture fell into. While this liberating impulse seemed threatening the conformity to the dominant social norms of the Cold War, it actually worked as an integral part of the Cold War culture, supplementing what the containment culture was missing.

My study on the “vulgar” TV discourse employs a similar approach to resistant and emancipatory identity culture in the context of the Cold War to trace out the multiple, shifting definitions of “vulgarity” in the Japanese TV ethics debate. The visions of popular culture that contested the society’s mainstream moral principles could also be found in Japan’s “vulgar” TV discourse. In several cases of “vulgar” program criticism, anti-TV critics found “erotic, grotesque and non-sense” images as a source of the “vulgarity.” While these low-brow elements were the target of the TV purification movement, Miriam Silverberg argues that the culture of “erotic, grotesque and non-sense” in Asakusa, Tokyo in 1920s and 1930s should be understood as a scathing satire of the modern state of Japan. She suggests that Asakusa’s grotesque scenes, such as sideshow freaks and oversized foreigners, represented a voiceless people’s protest against social orders over which they could exert little influence. She also observes that nonsense comedy was widely used in modern literature as a way to covertly deliver a message that

challenged authority.²⁵ Her discussion on the grotesquerie and nonsense in modern culture in prewar Japan draws from Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of carnival, in which humor, parody, exaggeration and hyperbole in premodern folk festivities empowered challenges to the existing power structure.²⁶ Such valences of meaning were not lost on those who weighed in during the TV controversies in Japan. In discussing "vulgar" TV programs, many TV critics found in those programs democratic implications that defied the existing moral regime and articulated alternative values. While I acknowledge that these alternative readings of "vulgar" programs are more than valid, I will take one step further and show that such discourses on the "vulgar" programs' democratic potential ultimately converged into the "free world" ideology that highlighted values of freedom and resistance through popular media representations.

Contextualizing Japanese television in terms of the Cold War will also contribute to a nuanced understanding of the history of the postwar Japan. Japanese postwar culture has only begun to be studied from the perspective of Cold War dynamics. Ann Sherif argued for the importance of the Cold War perspective in understanding Japan's postwar cultural events and texts in *Japan's Cold War: Media, Literature, and the Law*²⁷ She notes that earlier research tended to discuss postwar Japan apart from the intense global conflict, instead emphasizing the experience of the atomic bombs and the ensuing discourse of the peaceful use of the nuclear energy. However, as a strong ally of the United States, postwar Japan was an integral part of America's global Cold War and vigorously contributed to the cultural production of the Cold War values. Since Sherif's work, many scholars have explored cultural properties in this era within

²⁵ Miriam Silverberg, "2. Down-and-Out Grotesquerie", "3. Modern Nonsense" in *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007)

²⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984)

²⁷ Ann Sherif, *Japan's Cold War: Media, Literature, and the Law* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 1-6.

the framework of the Cold War, during which clashes between two different sets of political and social principles played an important role in Japan's postwar cultural imagination.²⁸ My dissertation seeks to deepen this area of research while building on it, by discussing the role of the Cold War in the creation of Japan's TV culture. The global political and cultural polarization and conflict of that era provides us with a window through which we can make sense of the meanings and values that the postwar media produced. The "vulgar" TV shows, seemingly distant from any serious moral discourses, could be read as central to the values of the Cold War that promoted a notion of the civic freedom that the "free world" could offer.

In fact, Japanese television scholarship has already firmly established television in Japan as a Cold War media. Simon Partner's *Assembled in Japan: Electrical Goods and the Making of the Japanese Consumer* shows that television was introduced into Japan much earlier than it otherwise would have, thanks on the one hand to the American and Japanese Cold War visionaries' strong will to import messages of "freedom" from the United States, and, on the other hand, the Japanese government's financial arrangement that enabled small electronic companies access to the core TV production technologies in the United States while limiting the importation of TV sets from it.²⁹ Arima Tetsuo delves deeper into the relation between the

²⁸ Among the representative works in the Cold War cultural studies of postwar Japan are Martyn David Smith, "A MAD age: Heibon Punch, Student Protest, the Media and Consumer Society in Cold War Japan," *Japan Forum* 28:3 (2016); Chelsea Szendi Schieder, "To Catch a Tiger by Its Toe: the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, Moral Re-Armament, and Cold War Orientalism," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 23:2 (2016); Jonathan E. Abel, "Masked Justice: Allegories of the Superhero in Cold War Japan," *Japan Forum* 26:2 (2014); Lee Sangjoon, "The Emergence of the Asian Film Festival: Cold War Asia and Japan's Reentrance to the Regional Film Industry in the 1950s," in *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Cinema*, ed. Miyao Daisuke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Jan Bardsley, *Women and Democracy in Cold War Japan* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014); Michael K. Bourdagh, *Sayonara Amerika, Sayonara Nippon: a Geopolitical Prehistory of J-pop* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Masuda Hajimu, "Fear of World War III: Social Politics of Japan's Rearmament and Peace Movements, 1950-3," *Journal of Contemporary History* 47:3 (2012); Nakamura Masako, "'Miss Atom Bomb' Contests in Nagasaki and Nevada: the Politics of Beauty, Memory, and the Cold War," *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal. English Supplement* 37 (2009); Marukawa Tetsushi, *Reisen bunka ron: wasurerareta aimaina sensō no genzaisei* (Tokyo: Sofūsha, 2005).

²⁹ Simon Partner, "3. The Vision of America: Bringing Television to Japan" in *Assembled in Japan: Electrical*

initiation of TV broadcasting and the Cold War dynamic by studying uncovered CIA documents. In his studies on the beginning of Japanese television, he provides an in-depth analysis of how the plan of establishing Japan's first TV station, brought up by Shōriki Matsutarō, the founder of the NTV, was in fact driven by the U.S. senator Karl Mundt's vision to build a pan-Pacific multi-purpose microwave network that would link Japan, Taiwan, Philippine, Australia and other Southeast Asian islands and serve as an anti-communism propaganda nexus. Although this grandiose cross-border propaganda network plan never materialized, television in Japan was operated in line with such policies by delivering programs that were produced by the United States Information Service (USIS), a U.S. overseas propaganda organization, and introducing "free world" images to Japanese society.³⁰

Thanks to these scholarly efforts, we now understand Japanese television as a media that was deeply ingrained with U.S. Cold War politics from the very beginning. Further, these studies on the institutional development of Japanese broadcasting trace how the legal framework of Japanese broadcasting had been constructed in accordance to the plans of the U.S. during its occupation, which among other things sought to guarantee independence of the broadcasting stations from possible state intervention. For example, Chiba Yūjirō clarified the process by which the intention of the U.S. occupation force to establish a legal framework that, modeled after the U.S. Federal Communications Committee (FCC), would build an independent broadcasting committee in order to exclude bureaucratic controls of the general broadcasting matters, was achieved by the enactment of the "Three Radio Laws" that consisted of the Broadcast Law (*hōsōhō*), the Radio Law (*denpāhō*) and the Law to Establish the Radio

Goods and the Making of the Japanese Consumer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

³⁰ Arima Tetsuo, *Nihon terebi to CIA: hakkutsusareta "Shōriki fairu"* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2006); Arima Tetsuo, *Kō shite terebi wa hajimatta: senryō, reisen, saigunbi no hazama de* (Kyoto: Mineruva Shobō, 2013).

Regulatory Commission (*denpa kanri iinkai setchihō*) in 1950.³¹ Even though the Radio Regulatory Commission, the independent broadcasting regulatory organization that the U.S. occupation intended to establish, would later be abolished by the government and broadcasting affairs was brought under the purview of the MPT (Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications), the regulation of broadcasting programs largely left to each station, and the MPT never exerted a censorial authority, at least not directly, as the prewar government had with regard to the NHK. This backdrop is critical in understanding the discourse around “vulgar” television as the stations’ self-regulation failed to stop these programs from being delivered to Japanese living rooms and those problematic TV programs went largely unchecked by the state authority. The government sought to alter the legal framework that had been set up during the occupation, and the criticism of “vulgar” programs criticism was an integral part of these legal effort; nonetheless, the liberal legal framework of the Broadcast Law survived throughout this period of high economic growth. The independence of broadcasting was a keystone of the occupation’s “democratization” and the removal of Japan’s prewar totalitarianism. At the same time, it was a cornerstone of U.S. Cold War propaganda efforts.

While it is true that the institutional framework of Japanese TV was laid out so as to guarantee the values and messages of the capitalist bloc would be spread by this new popular media, there has not been much scholarly attention toward how such messages were articulated by TV programs, in detail. In many cases, the ideas were conveyed in an implicative fashion through program contents, all the more so with entertainment features. Though entertainment programs appear uninterested in articulating moral values, in this dissertation, I would like to

³¹ Chiba Yūjirō, “Hōsōhō ni okeru jishu kisei,” *Shinbungaku hyōron* 10 (1960): 5-6. On details of the “Three Broadcast Law,” see Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Broadcasting in Japan*, 96-100; Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 270-275.

highlight how such “non-ethical” programs in fact illuminated certain ideas and concepts that were intensely contested by various social groups.

With this methodological orientation, in my research, I will access the history of the early Japanese television with the key word of “vulgar” programs. The time span I deal with in this study, from 1953 to 1973, overlaps with the so-called age of high economic growth. Surpassing prewar levels of production by the mid-1950s, the Japanese economy became one of the powerhouses of global capitalism in the 1960s. In this period, Japanese society underwent radical transformations toward the so-called mass society (*taishū shakai*) in which the rising middle-class identified themselves as enthusiastic consumers and bearers of new-found affluence. Their desire for consumption and identification with “modern life” was mediated by an expanding market in mass media, including newspapers, magazines, radio and finally, television.³² During this period, sales in TV sets, along with other home electronic appliances, became an important part of the rapid economic growth. While still extremely expensive for middle-income families, TV sets emerged as a centerpiece of the postwar Japanese middle-class and their “modernized” life. Starting in 1953 with only two stations, NTV and NHK, TV broadcasting in Japan exhibited tremendous growth over a short period of time. By 1960, there were some eighty TV stations across the country and, by 1962, around half of Japanese households owned a TV set.³³ In this way, TV broadcasting became firmly embedded in the everyday fabric of Japanese life. This fast-growing TV broadcasting industry necessarily stirred the discussion of TV’s social responsibility. All walks of people in the archipelago were exposed to TV broadcasting to various degrees. The belief that the new mass media exerted a significant influence on society at large became

³² On the shaping of Japanese postwar mass culture, see Marilyn Ivy, “Formations of Mass Culture,” in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 247.

³³ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 398, 415.

widespread. The fact that each station was using an airwave regulated by the state as public property also indicated that TV broadcasters felt pressure to produce at least some programs with a degree of public service in mind. In this context, the “vulgar” program discourse hit the broadcasting community, propelling both the networks and the viewers to think seriously about the nature of TV broadcasting in postwar Japan, where the struggle for peace and democracy coincided with new-found abundance in the economy.

Chapter Organization

This dissertation consists of four chapters, each of which discusses a distinct aspect of the “vulgar” TV program debate and different TV program genres that were the target of the anti-TV criticism. The first chapter tackles some of the political implications of the debate. In the first chapter, I clarify the Japanese government’s political intentions behind its vehement attacks on the “vulgar” television. The second, third and fourth chapter each explore TV program genres that were most often targeted with condemnation as “vulgar.” In search of answers to the questions of why these programs were defined as “vulgar” and what other meanings were created by broadcasters and consumed by audiences through these programs, I would like to probe the cultural dynamics that were brought up by the effect of those controversies.

In summary, the first chapter will investigate the way Japanese state sought to intervene into the broadcasting process and the relationship of the “vulgar” TV debate with the government’s media control. Throughout 1950s and 1960s, governmental agencies were main driving forces behind the “vulgar” TV discourse. Prime ministers, MPT ministers and other politicians were extremely vocal in demanding purification of television. Mainly through various types of committees on the prevention of juvenile delinquency, government officials sought to prove the

harmful effect of “unhealthy” TV programs on the mental development of Japanese youth. However, the state’s ultimate goal in raising this issue was to revise the Broadcast Law which had been established in 1950 in line with the U.S. occupation’s liberal approach to the legal framework of broadcasting. In order to alter the legal structure and enhance its censorial authority toward TV programs, the government needed a pretext that supported the claim that broadcasters’ self-regulation was insufficient and state intervention was necessary in rectifying the problems with TV programs. Such a desire to censor TV programs had much to do with Japan’s place in the global politics of the 1960s’. With the legitimacy of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty seriously in question within Japanese civil society, Japanese government vigorously promoted the notion of national security, and television was a perfect propaganda platform. However, such an attempt to bring television over to the side of the government was never fully realized. Instead, TV programs became a heated battlefield where opposing views on Japan’s place in the Cold War collided.

The second chapter will deal with audience participation programs, which had a long history in Japanese broadcasting dating back to the prewar radio. During the occupation period, Japanese radio broadcasting was under the tight guidance of the U.S. occupation and, accordingly, was focused on delivering messages of demilitarization, internationalism and democracy. One manifestation of these priorities was programming formats that invited ordinary audience members up to the broadcasting stage. These audience participation programs were hugely successful and television adapted these formats for the small screen. In this chapter, informed by previous studies on audience participation radio programs in the prewar and occupation period, I will explore how the democratic promises of the audience participation on radio were realized in the TV era, albeit in unexpected ways. The volatile nature of these

amateurs' performances in front of the TV camera was criticized as "vulgar" by many TV critics. On the other hand, many commentators deeply enjoyed how these amateurs, wittingly or not, frequently broke the conventions of broadcasting. Both the positive and negative views on the "vulgar" audience participation shows articulated the ambivalent ethical values of Cold War cultural policies, according to which the Japanese public were expected to "perform" democracy, even as part of the promise of democracy offered the possibility of non-conformism.

The third chapter will discuss a program genre called "wide show." *Kijima norio mōningu shō* (Kijima Norio's Morning Show) of NET (Nippon Education Television), started in April 1964, was the first of this genre. This hybrid show, modeled after the U.S. TV show *Today* of NBC, consisted of live newscast that focused on real-time relay coverage, talks with people in the news, and various entertainment segments. While the entertainment portions of these shows were criticized as containing "vulgar" elements, many TV critics found in this genre a new democratic possibility of equalizing the relationship between media and audiences, as the show was characterized by two-way mutual communications. In this chapter, I juxtapose this new type of hybrid show with the rise of weekly magazines in mainstream Japanese reading culture. Wide shows and weekly magazines had many things in common, including an emphasis on mutuality between media and audiences, which media critics compared to a "feedback loop." In conclusion, the third chapter shows how the communicative model articulated by wide shows and weekly magazines was a core cultural concept of the alternative media and its mode of artistic expression in the United States, where increasing tendencies of centralization of power alarmed cultural creators, who advocated for a mutually communicative model as an antidote to the latent authoritarianism in the society.

The fourth chapter examines female TV viewership through the lens of daytime melodramas.

In the 1960s, a group of serial dramas that depicted heroines' extra-marital romance grasped the attention of housewife viewers between 1:00 and 2:00 pm. Predictably, these melodramas were also criticized as "vulgar" for the boldness of their sexual scenes. In this chapter, I will link the popularity of the daytime melodrama genre to the rise of a new middle-class society and the transformation of women's gender roles in the wider context of the Cold War. As in the United States, postwar Japan saw the rise of the nuclear family ideal that revolved around housewives' central role in nurturing family members. This family structure put enormous pressure on the shoulders of housewives. While helped by modern electric home appliances that streamlined housework, Japanese housewives in this period of high economic growth struggled with a sense of isolation and helplessness. Unable to easily escape from the everyday drudgery, they came to consider television as their best friend. In this context, daytime melodramas provided the housewife viewers with a daydream in which they could temporarily escape the distress of reality and imagine a different perspective of life.

Through investigating these "vulgar" programs and the social and moral discourses on them, this dissertation demonstrates how Japanese entertainment television, seemingly aloof from serious discussions of social value, participated in the creation of meanings that had a great deal of relevance to the organizing principles of the postwar Japanese society. In several ways, the "vulgar" elements such as obscenity, violence, grotesquery and nonsense comedies ran against the grain of a culture that stressed, as an end in itself, conformity with social values that formed the pillars of Cold War-era Japan. On the other hand, the programs in question represented the other side of Japan's Cold War cultural dynamic, whereby emancipation from and resistance to those constraining forces were equally appreciated as integral parts of the "free world" society.

Chapter 1. Keeping Television Pure and Clear: the Social Background of the Discourse on “Vulgar” Television

Introduction

Throughout 1950s and 1960s, the relation between the United States and Japan could hardly be described as a honeymoon. While they were both tied to the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, they clashed with each other on several fronts. While the Japanese government sought to stay within U.S. security coverage, it also pursued maximal autonomy in making its own fate on issues such as rearmament, nuclear weapons, military aid to U.S.-led wars and conducting relations with other countries.¹ However, as far as Japan remained under U.S. hegemony and its containment politics, the domestic cultural landscape in Japan was strongly conditioned by the U.S.-dominated Cold War culture. At the beginning of this period, television was introduced in Japan with hopes of delivering messages of the “free world” to the Japanese population. But this did not mean Japanese television was bound to work as a Cold War media machine in precisely the way that U.S. Cold War cultural strategists wanted. It was up to Japanese government and broadcasters to maintain television as such, and it did not take long for them to realize that to keep television within the framework of the Cold War media would be a tall order, particularly throughout the politically turbulent era of the first two decades following the end of occupation.

From the beginning, the history of Japanese television is marked by the leading role that the government played in terms of standardizing core technologies, distributing licenses, allocating frequencies and regulating import of TV sets and parts. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Japanese

¹ On the postwar U.S.-Japan relations, see Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: a History of U.S.-Japan Relations* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 258-358.

government continued to make critical decisions on television broadcasting in the name of radio administration (*denpa gyōsei*), mainly through its competent administrative agency, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT). Under this state leadership, NHK and commercial broadcasters developed their respective channels in a context of both cooperation and fierce competition. Therefore, their key to success was hinged on the degree to which they could cooperate with the state's media policies, and the government was not shy of exercising its power to articulate its cultural agendas. Among the biggest issues in regulating television concerned “vulgar” programs. As the competition among television stations intensified, viewers started to feel that commercial channels in particular were increasingly airing “vulgar” programs packed with violence, obscenity and coarse language. Some understood this as an inevitable by-product of the expansion of the television broadcasting market while others reacted to with anger and protest. However, as this issue came to the attention of the government's media agencies, the discussion of media politics quickly became intertwined with larger social issues of postwar Japan, such as democracy, freedom of speech and international peace. In this chapter, I will examine how the issue of “vulgar” television programs emerged as public controversies and how the Japanese state responded with various regulatory agenda. In doing so, I will clarify how TV culture in early postwar Japan was firmly situated in the U.S.-Japan Cold War landscape, and that the discourse on “vulgar” television played an important part in the state's movement toward confining Japanese television within the Cold War cultural logic.

A Nation of a Hundred-Million Idiots: is Television a Vulgar Medium?

Soon after television made its presence felt in Japan, schisms among TV viewers emerged as to the operation of TV broadcasting. One of the favorites of early Japanese TV fans was pro-

wrestling matches featuring Rikidōzan, a legendary pro-wrestler who popularized the sport in post-war Japan. His pro-wrestling matches were a critical part of the beginning of Japanese TV culture that has been characterized by collective viewership of outdoor television (*gaitō terebi*).² However, it was also true that not all viewers were fond of Rikidōzan's pro-wrestling matches because these matches as they were often accompanied by cruelty and bloodshed. Reportedly, two elderly viewers were shocked to death upon watching a pro-wrestler drenched with blood in one of Rikidōzan's matches. Although preexisting health conditions had made them susceptible, the incident provoked vigorous criticism of televisual violence.³ Moreover, there were fears that the extreme degree of violence shown in the pro-wrestling matches might badly affect young viewers. These concerns were exacerbated as it became common for children to act out their own version of wrestling, called *puroresu gokko* (pro-wrestling play), which came into fashion around 1955. Sometimes, their innocent mimicry led to injuries or even tragic death.⁴ Newspapers reported these incidents very seriously, raising further criticism of the violence of the TV sports. Rikidōzan defended himself and his support, saying that pro-wrestling matches were a professionals' sports that respected sportsmanship. Public outcry notwithstanding, the popularity of pro-wrestling in Japan remained unrivaled throughout the late 1950s, becoming the most-watched live sports on television. Pro-wrestling's popularity waned with the increasing domestic viewership of television. From 1957 on, as more and more people bought their own TV sets, the dominant mode of TV viewership shifted from collective viewing on the street to home-viewing.

² On Rikidōzan's pro-wrestling and its historical significance in the discussion of memory politics, see Yoshikuni Igarashi, "Chapter 4. Naming the Unnameable," in *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). On the outdoor television, see Yoshimi Shunya and Tsuchiya Reiko ed., *Taishūbunka to media* (Kyoto: Mineruva Shobo, 2010), 170-178., Jayson Makoto Chun, "Chapter Three, Pro Wrestling and Body Slams: Early TV as a Mass Event," in *"A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots"?: a Social History of Japanese Television, 1953-1973* (New York: Routledge, 2007),

³ Chun, *"A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots"?*, 157; Yoshimi and Tsuchiya, *Taishūbunka to media*, 181.

⁴ Yoshimi and Tsuchiya, *Taishūbunka to media*, 172; Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō* (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2001), 402.

With this shift, wild sports such as pro-wrestling and boxing, which had catered to the predominantly male viewers on the street, had difficulty finding a place among home-viewing audiences that included housewives and children.⁵ By 1962, when roughly half of Japanese households had TV sets, Rikidōzan could no longer defend the validity of his performance in the face of continued criticism.

The problem of “inadequate TV programs” involved more than pro-wrestling or, indeed, any genre of programming. The Broadcast Law of 1950 permitted commercial alongside public broadcast. This legislation had enabled commercial radio stations to start business. The newly launched commercial radio channels focused their program schedules heavily on entertainment features, an outcome repeated with TV broadcasting, which exhibited the same two-pronged approach of commercial as well as public broadcasters. TV licenses were given under the condition that 30% or more broadcasting time be dedicated to information and education.⁶ However, after having obtained the license, television stations largely neglected this clause in the course of fierce fights for audience ratings. Almost invariably, commercial TV stations composited the programming in which varied entertainment shows took up the largest portion of airtime. Moreover, the “ratings war” pressured TV broadcasters to copy each others’ popular programs, resulting in a great deal of convergence in the making of entertainment programs. To many viewers, all channels held similar shows with familiar formats, which gave rise to the sense that channel selection was almost meaningless, despite the considerably wide range of options.⁷

In this context came the criticism of Ōya Sōichi, which we discussed briefly in the

⁵ Yoshimi and Tsuchiya, *Taishūbunka to media*, 179-181.

⁶ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Hōsō 50-nenshi* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1977), 551.

⁷ Matsuda Hiroshi, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 2* (Zushi: Sōshisha, 1981), 89-90.

introduction. The incident of the *Nandemo yarima-show* appalled television critics, who had a firm conviction that television should aspire to more than merely giving audiences instant amusement and using sensationalism to garner ratings. In particular, *Tokyo Newspaper* sought comments from critics. Ōya went further than most, extending his criticism to a series of articles. In an article on January 21, 1957, Ōya reviled the current state of TV broadcasting:

However, entertainment programs devised for television, are sometimes—no always, frighteningly unbearable. First on the list are the various quizzes, then the various television dramas, and then the popular song programs that occupy the majority of prime time. No matter where you turn the dial, the programs are extremely cheap, coarse, and vulgar. A person said that this is a movement to turn the citizens into idiots, and this may be a bit of an exaggeration, but if people enjoy that kind of stuff every day at home, the only thing certain is that they will never become smart.⁸

In this article, he made two points. First, he felt that there were simply too many “vulgar” programs in the TV program schedule for all channels and that these programs were so similar to each other that the channel selection made little difference. No matter which channel the viewers turned to, chances were they would be met with the same kind of entertainment features—quiz shows, dramas, music shows, etc. He finally arrived at the conclusion that the state of television would turn Japan into “a nation of a 100 million idiots” (*ichioku sōhakuchika*).⁹

⁸ Ōya Sōichi, “Hōshasen,” *Tokyo shinbun*, January 21, 1957. Quoted in Chun, *A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots*?, 163.

⁹ The exact term “turning into a nation of a 100 million idiots” appeared in a different article of his. On February 2, he wrote in *Shūkan tokyo*, “When we look at the state of today’s mass media, we see that the masses will become happy devouring anything. [. . .] Everyday on television there is an array of vulgar programs worse than

Ōya was not alone in condemning television's "vulgarity." Jayson Makoto Chun, in his comprehensive study of the history of Japanese television, points out that in the 1950s, a large number of postwar intellectuals, reflecting upon the wartime state's unilateral way of mobilizing people to the war effort and the blind support of the general population, advocated democratic transformation of the society, and Japan's role as a symbol of international peace in the Cold War world order.¹⁰ These intellectuals believed that it was crucial for the people in Japan to participate directly in the nation's democratization. To this end, it was necessary to give the Japanese public a right sense of history, democracy, resistance and internationalism, and television as a mass media must serve this function of awakening people to a better future of Japan. For those who had such an ambitious expectation toward television, the current state of TV broadcasting was miserable, indeed. Soon after Ōya coined the phrase "turning into a nation of a 100 million idiots," it became a commonplace in the statements of intellectuals who commented on "vulgar" television. *Hakuchi bangumi* (program of stupidity) now became a common nickname attached to the problematic TV programs that were regarded by TV critics as vulgar and meaningless, and therefore detrimental to public awareness of social progress.

However, ironically, the progressive intellectuals' attack on the vulgarity of television was soon to be picked up by TV broadcasting. The Broadcast Law, established in 1950 under the influence of the U.S. occupation, dictated, "Broadcast programs shall never be interfered with or regulated by any person, excepting in cases where it is done with powers provided for by law."¹¹

This prevented Japanese government from establishing formal censorship on television.

storyboard shows (*kamishibai*). A campaign to turn us into "a nation of a 100 million idiots" through the advanced mass media of radio and television has developed." Chun, "*A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots*?", 164. On Ōya's own account of the creation of the term, see Ōya Sōichi, "Ichioku sōhakuchika meimei shimatsuki," *CBC Report* 2:4 (1958): 10-13.

¹⁰ Chun, "*A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots*?", 167.

¹¹ NHK Sōgō Hōsō Bunka Kenkyūjo, *50 Years of Japanese Broadcasting* (Tokyo: NHK, 1977), 375.

Although this clause did not stop the government from putting informal pressure on the broadcasters, it helped TV stations gain a certain degree of “freedom of speech” in their daily operation. However, upon gaining sovereignty in 1952, the Japanese government continued its effort to change the legal structure so that it might have a firmer hand in broadcasting affairs. Thus, the heightened criticism on the TV programs gave the government a good opportunity to start pushing for such structural changes that would enhance governmental control over domestic broadcasters.¹²

The government’s attack on vulgar TV programs came in the context of much larger concerns that some cultural products would badly influence the education of children. Earlier in the 1950s, concerns about “vulgar” mass culture emerged among PTA parents and social activists. Hiromu Nagahara discusses this period in which the so-called *kasutori* culture in the occupation period persisted through the immediate post-occupation era.¹³ These critics believed that the decadence of mass culture, epitomized by problematic popular songs, movies and magazines, could badly influence children. In this context, mass media came under vigorous scrutiny for widely circulating such cultural products. Parents’ groups reacted swiftly whenever the media “vulgarization” issue emerged. For example, in 1954, Akasaka Mother’s Society (*Haha no Kai*), in association with juvenile problems groups, carried out a campaign in which members of the society brought out “problematic” books and magazines from their homes, and burned them.¹⁴

The intense response of parents groups went in hand-in-hand with the government’s interests in managing juvenile delinquency issues. In the occupation period, as the number of the

¹² Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi* 2, 91.

¹³ Hiromu Nagahara, “Chapter 4 Activists as Critics: The Cold War Politics of Mass Culture” in “Unpopular Music: The Politics of Mass Culture in Modern Japan” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2011). On a historical analysis of the *kasutori* culture, see John Dower, “Chapter 4. Cultures of Defeat,” in *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999).

¹⁴ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 352; Nagahara, “Unpopular Music,” 147.

children who had lost their home and parents during the war increased, the sight of vagrant youngsters causing problems on the street started to be viewed as a threat to the larger society.¹⁵ In coping with this problem, in April 1949, the cabinet established the Council for Youth Problem Countermeasures (*Seishōnen Mondai Taisaku Kyōgikai*, henceforth CYPC) within the Cabinet Secretariat (*Naikaku Kanbō*).¹⁶ With intensifying criticism of “harmful” popular entertainment, the CYPC turned into the Central Council for the Youth Problem (*Chūō Seishōnen Mondai Kyōgikai*, henceforth CCYP),¹⁷ as a permanent organization. The abovementioned book-burning event by the Akasaka Mother’s Society took place during the week-long “Movement to Protect and Nurture the Youth” organized by the CCYP. In the 1950s and 1960s, the CCYP served as the main avenue for the central government to express its concerns about the potential tie between juvenile crime and mass culture, mobilizing campaigns whenever popular concerns about the “vulgar” mass media flared up. In 1955 and in 1958, in the midst of increasing social concerns about the “corrupted” mass culture, the CCYP requested radio and TV stations to practice “self-restraint” (*jishuku*)¹⁸ which, in effect, meant self-censorship.

Calls for greater regulation of mass media by the government and parents’ groups ultimately led to a legal shift that increased the government’s capacity to regulate Japanese broadcasting. In fact, the government’s attempt to revise the Broadcast Law and make the Japanese broadcasting more tractable goes back to the moment when Japan became independent of the occupation in

¹⁵ For the discussion of Juvenile delinquency in modern Japan, see David R. Ambaras, *Bad youth: Juvenile Delinquency and the Politics of Everyday Life in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006)

¹⁶ This was soon followed by the construction of the same kind of youth problems councils at the local level. This central-local network of youth problems councils received a legal sanction in 1953 by the Diet’s passing of the Council for Youth Problem Establishment Law (*Seishōnen Mondai Kyōgikai Setchihō*), and became a primary governmental structure for handling of the juvenile delinquency. Nagahara, “Unpopular Music,” 126-127.

¹⁷ The transition from the CYPC to the CCYP does not seem to have involved a significant change of its function. But the CCYP was established by the legislation and directly subject to the Office of Prime Minister while the CYPC was established by the decision of the Cabinet and belonged to the Cabinet Secretariat (*Naikaku Kanbō*). See Gotō Masahiko, “Sengo shakai to seishōnen gyōsei no henshen,” *Gendai shakai bunka kenkyū* 37 (2006): 32.

¹⁸ Nagahara, “Unpopular Music,” 147; Matsuda Hiroshi, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi* 1 (Zushi: Sōshisha, 1980), 308.

1952. As soon as the Japanese government assumed legislative power, the Yoshida cabinet abolished the Radio Regulatory Commission (RRC) which had been created by the U.S. occupation to guarantee the independence of Japanese broadcasting.¹⁹ Various broadcasting affairs, including licensing, was then arrogated to the MPT. The broadcast license for commercial stations expired every three years and renewals were provided solely at the discretion of the MPT. Though denials of licenses remained rare, the fact that the MPT would reevaluate the broadcast license on a regular basis put heavy pressure on broadcasters.²⁰

Despite the abolition of the RRC, to the extent that the Broadcast Law stipulated the autonomy of broadcasting, there remained meaningful checks on the power of the state to interfere in broadcasting. Therefore, changing this legal structure became one of the government's priorities. In July 1953, soon after television broadcasting started, the cabinet unsuccessfully submitted to the Diet a revised Broadcast Law that would give the minister of MPT comprehensive powers to supervise the general operation of NHK and appoint the president and the members of the Board of Governors.²¹ Again in 1957, a new and energetic minister of MPT, and future Prime Minister, Tanaka Kakuei, fiercely pushed for revision. He was clear in these intentions in his speech at the Committee of the Posts and Telecommunications of the Diet, when he argued for the establishment of a program deliberation council under the MPT.²² This announcement was timely in the sense that it came right after the upsurge of

¹⁹ On the establishment of the RRC, see Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 270-275.

²⁰ Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi* 2, 91-92. On the issue of relicensing by the MPT, see Kido Mataichi ed., *Kōza gendai jōnarizumu* 3 (Tokyo: Jijitsushinsha, 1973), 29-32.

²¹ The Broadcast Law of 1950 stipulated that the total of eight NHK's governors, representing eight districts of the archipelago, be appointed by the Prime Minister with approval of the both houses of the Diet. Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 276. The board of Governors is NHK's main decision-making body for its important matters of management and operation. "Senior Management," NHK Online, accessed May 27, 2017, <http://www.nhk.or.jp/pr/english/management/index.html>.

²² He later clarified that this council would be an advisory organization which was responsible for the minister's inquiries about the general broadcasting affairs. It was to consist of "civilian intellectuals." Matsuda, *Dokumento*

criticism against the “vulgar” TV programs in the wake of Ōya’s “a nation of a hundred-million idiots” article. Taking advantage of the escalating social anxiety of TV programs gone wild, Tanaka believed that he could garner support for more radical change.

Although not without bitter opposition from commercial broadcasters, the bill of the revised Broadcast Law passed the Diet in 1959. This revision did not satisfy Tanaka’s aspirations of creating a program-monitoring structure under the cabinet, but it nonetheless expanded the scope of the government’s censorial authority so as to require every broadcasting station to set up its own program-monitoring system, including program codes and a program deliberation council. These self-regulatory bodies within each station were to consist of “experienced intellectuals” (*gakushiki keikensha*) and play a central role in dealing with program ethics and “vulgarity” in cooperation with producers and executives. The function of the councils was also determined by the program codes that each station was obliged to establish.²³ The in-station program deliberation council system that the revision laid out was, therefore, a self-regulation structure that gave each station a great amount of discretion as to the establishment of the program code and the scope of authority of the council. The revision also included measures to increase the size of the NHK leadership, which allowed the cabinet to install more pro-government figures at NHK in various executive capacities.

Even after the revision of the Broadcast Law, the government did not relent. Nor did the social criticism of “vulgar” TV programs cease. Through the late 1950s and the early 1960s, propelled by large national events such as the imperial wedding in 1959 and the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, as well as the opening of dozens of local TV stations, nationwide sales in TV sets

hōsōsengoshi 2, 95.

²³ For details of the 1959’s Broadcast Law revision, see Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 406-407.

exploded, with television becoming a staple of the Japanese middle-class homes. The so-called *ikka tanran* (a happy family) became the central ideological piece of middle-class Japanese identity, and a TV set in the living room was increasingly seen as an essential part of the picture.²⁴ Now that the television was expected to gather together family members in front of its screen, the production of programs suitable for family viewership became a central concern of broadcasters and cultural critics. Thanks to the revision of the Broadcast Law, all of the TV stations had to set up program councils, but by the early 1960s, it became obvious that these broadcasters' self-regulatory institutions were no solution for the proliferation of the "vulgar" TV shows, as competition among commercial broadcasters grew ever more intense. Higher audience rates were always translated into better profits, and commercial stations became ardent followers of a ratings-first approach. Station executives and sponsors of the programs tended to say that they were not really concerned about ratings,²⁵ but the field staff in charge of producing programs thought differently. For many of the network producers, ratings were a major determinant in the survival of their programs and, thus, their careers. A producer reputed to make high-rated programs drew an interesting, if unsettling, comparison: "I'm only a workman (*shokunin*), so if I'm asked to boost the ratings, I try hard to make programs that can get good

²⁴ On the creation of postwar Japanese middle class, see Ezra Vogel, *Japan's New Middle Class: The Salary Man and His Family in a Tokyo Suburb* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971). On the creation of the middle-class family culture and ideology and its strong tie to the electrical goods sales, see Simon Partner, "Chapter 5. Creating the "Bright Life"" in *Assembled in Japan: Electrical Goods and the Making of the Japanese Consumer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999)

²⁵ Sanuka Mitsuo, Sumii Takao and Ueda Tetsu, "Zadankai: Teizoku bangumi no mou hitotsu no kao," *Masukomi shimin* 32 (1969): 60. In a roundtable about "vulgar programs," Isoda Isamu, a former executive managing director of NTV, argues that although it is true that station executives pay close attention to the ratings, they are not swayed by the ratings or led to coerce the staff to produce whatever works for good rating. Also it is discussed that even if company executives want to sponsor "good" programs, they cannot convince their PR department who believes low-rated programs do not help their PR effort. Takada Motosaburō et al., "NHK·minpō gōdō zadankai: "teizoku bangumi" to "henkō bangumi"," *Masukomi bunka* 5 (1971): 10-11.

ratings. I'm just like a pilot who was ordered to drop bombs in North Vietnam.”²⁶

The systematization of TV ratings started with the foundation of Nielsen Japan in June 1960, which was followed by another ratings survey institution, Video Research Ltd., in September 1962. Along with the ready-to-go statistics, the sudden increase in the number of commercial TV stations and the rise of national TV networks, all of which occurred due to the 1957's mass licensing by the MPT, resulted in the explosive growth of the TV advertisement market. From that point forward, the survival of each TV station was entirely dependent on its performance in the market. It became more and more difficult for most of the program producers to ignore their ratings. Such constraints forced the producers to make all-inclusive programs that aimed at the population across class, gender and generational lines. Conversely, it became ever more difficult to create programs that appealed to special interests or particular groups of people. The end result of the war of audience ratings was an extreme degree of uniformity of TV programs in their formats and the proliferation of primetime entertainment shows that were criticized as “vulgar.”²⁷ To many, Ōya's phrase “a nation of a hundred-million idiots” still seemed relevant.

The continued criticism of the “vulgar” characteristics of the TV programs met a favorable response from an unexpected source, proving that Japan was not alone in wrestling with “vulgar” television. In the 1950s, television diffused into various cultural scenes across the globe, and caused cultural anxiety about the degeneration of the traditional values. The United States, the global leader of commercial television, was no exception in this aspect. Even while Ōya's criticism was still on the lips of anti-television agitators in Japan, it was Newton Minow, a Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)²⁸, who gave full-throated

²⁶ Sanuka, Sumii and Ueda, “Teizoku bangumi no mou hitotsu no kao”, 64.

²⁷ Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 2*, 215-222.

²⁸ The Federal Communications Commission is an independent Federal institution that regulates interstate and

expression to similar skepticism toward television in the United States. In May 9, 1961, he gave a famous speech at the National Association of Broadcasters convention,

When television is good, nothing—not the theater, not the magazines or newspapers—nothing is better. But when television is bad, nothing is worse. I invite you to sit down in front of your television set when your station goes on the air and stay there without a book, magazine, or newspaper, profit-and-loss sheet or rating book to distract you, and keep your eyes glued to that set, until the station signs off. I can assure you that you will observe a vast wasteland.²⁹

You will see a procession of game shows, formula comedies about totally unbelievable families, blood and thunder, mayhem, violence, sadism, murder, western bad men, western good men, private eyes, gangsters, more violence, and cartoons. And endlessly commercials—many screaming, cajoling, and offending. And most of all, boredom. True, you'll see a few things you will enjoy. But they will be very, very few. And if you think I exaggerate, I only ask you to try it.³⁰

When we examine this speech in tandem with Ōya's comment on television which we have discussed above, we can find that these two statements released on the opposite sides of the Pacific Ocean bore striking parallels. They both expressed concerns about the extreme degree of

international communication by radio, television, wire, satellite and cable. On details of the function of the FCC, see Patricia Moloney Figliola, "The Federal Communications Commission: Current Structure and Its Role in the Changing Telecommunications Landscape," *CRS Report*, April 15, 2016, 1, accessed May 30, 2017, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL32589.pdf>.

²⁹ Jeff Kisseloff, *The Box: An Oral History of Television, 1920–1961* (New York: Viking, 1995), 506–507. Quoted in Chun, "A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots"?, 185.

³⁰ For the complete text of Minow's speech, see "Newton N. Minow: Television and the Public Interest," *American Rhetoric*, accessed May 27, 2017, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/newtonminow.htm>.

banality that characterized TV programs. Moreover, the two TV critics both agreed that the current state of TV broadcasting was pathetic and needed to be rectified immediately. Like Ōya's speech of "a nation of one hundred million idiots," Minow's phrase "a vast wasteland" repeated as an encapsulation of the problem with television. It was only natural that Minow's message picked up all the way across the Pacific, in Japan.

Not content with simply offering criticism, Minow also outlined in his speech the steps that could be taken to build something wholesome in the wasteland:

Now how will these principles be applied? Clearly at the heart of the FCC's authority lies its power to license, to renew or fail to renew, or to revoke a license. As you know, when your license comes up for renewal, your performance is compared with your promises. I understand that many people feel that in the past licenses were often renewed *pro forma*. I say to you now: renewal will not be *pro forma* in the future. There is nothing permanent or sacred about a broadcast license.

To the dismay of the participating commercial broadcasters, he overtly threatened to revoke the license when they proved to be unfaithful to the initial "promises." Predictably, his intention to toughen the license-renewal process in particular sparked strong opposition among the mass media, who argued that, when put into practice, this policy would lead to a governmental censorship and a breach of the First Amendment.³¹ Nevertheless, his relicensing policy was carried out, at least to an extent. By granting a limited one-year renewal of the license to some of

³¹ For the debate on the FCC's policy, see Uchikawa Yoshimi, "Minō hatsugen no hamon: sono haigo ni fukuzai suru mondai," *Gekkan nihon terebi* 37 (1962)

the stations whose performance in the airwaves was brought into question, the FCC made it clear that future licenses would only be given to those who satisfied the conditions of the initial license.

Perhaps inspired by the strong posture of its U.S. counterpart, the MPT officials in Japan sought to strongly urge the broadcasters to meet the conditions of the license. The Minister of MPT, Sakumizu Hisatsune, in a news conference in September 1961, the same year as Minow's speech, said, "As for the relicensing process that will take place in June next year, we will review each station's broadcasting contents, and if necessary, we will revoke the licenses."³² This statement also stirred opposition and anxieties among TV broadcasters. The attack on the "vulgar" TV programs was revitalized, and the broadcasters were hard pressed to take decisive steps.

Another event that propelled the "vulgar" television controversy involved the National Association for the Study of Politics (*Kokumin Seiji Kenkyukai*, hereafter NASP), which was founded in 1960 with the monetary support of the leading corporations of Japanese industry. In July 1963, this association issued a brochure that contained "The Suggestions for the Improvement of the Television Program," a treatise on what programs were "desirable" or "undesirable."³³ This report was based on research that was allegedly performed by college students in seven major universities of Tokyo. According to the brochure, all of these students belonged to their respective mass media study groups in their own universities. The research was said to have been performed by these college students who watched all five Tokyo-based channels—NHK, NTV, TBS, Fuji TV and NET—during a one-month period. Based on this comprehensive survey, the brochure first confirmed that the ratio of entertainment programs in the broadcasting schedule was disproportionately large in comparison with other categories such

³² Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 608.

³³ Kokumin Seiji Kenkyūkai, *Terebi bangumi kaizen e no teigen* (Tokyo: Kokumin Seiji Kenkyūkai, 1963)

as newscast, education, information and sports. In each of the five channels, entertainment broadcasting took up the largest proportion. In addition, with the exception of NHK, more than half the airtime of all four commercial channels was occupied by entertainment programs. The report highly criticized this excess of entertainment, stating, “it has been said that it is necessary to keep the balance in the programming because of this excess of the entertainment programs. However, there has been no effort devoted to this task.” The report also referred to the clause of the Broadcast Law which stipulated “harmony among various types of broadcasting programs,” and which suggested a roster of “10% of educational programs and 20% of informational programs”; the report lamented that television stations, even NHK, paid little attention to this clause.

The report went on to assess all of the entertainment programs in the one-month span of the survey. According to the report, those college students graded every entertainment program by a ten-point grading scale. The grading criteria was as follows:

8-10 points: programs that present exceptional degree of informational and social elements (*kyōyōsei to shakaisei*).

5-7 points: programs which contain a fair amount of informational and social elements.

3-4 points: programs regarded as vulgar.

1-2 points: programs that are required to be discontinued.

Based on these criteria, their evaluation found that 23.58% of broadcasting time was filled with programs that were either “vulgar” or “required to be discontinued.” Among commercial channels only, 32.69% of the broadcasting time was occupied by the “problematic” programs.

Based on this research, the association made several suggestions for the future of TV broadcasting: observe the principles suggested by the Broadcast Law (30% of educational and informational broadcasting); follow the “30% rule” even for programs in primetime; keep balance among domestic channels to avoid uniformity; emphasize education, information, and news even in commercial broadcasting; position the NHK to lead the transformation; expel “*zokuaku*” (vulgar and evil) programs; break free from the heavy dependence upon foreign TV movies; refine commercials; and pressure the program councils in each station to take up in reality the responsibilities and duties they were chartered to perform.

This report of NASP, immediately after its release, drew heavy criticism. First, it was revealed that, although the brochure alleged that a good number of college students were involved in the survey, it turned out only three students did all the watching and evaluating of TV programs, casting suspicion on the validity of the survey itself.³⁴ In addition, as evident from the grading criteria, the research prioritized informational and social elements even when it assessed entertainment programs. It struck many as nonsensical to analyze entertainment from the perspective of providing information.³⁵

Nevertheless, the brochure had a profound impact on the discussion of “vulgar” television.³⁶ First, the brochure marked the first time the term “*zokuaku*” (vulgar and evil) appeared in this discourse. From this point on, “*zokuaku*” came to replace less harsh terms, such as “*teizoku*” (vulgar) or “*hakuchi*” (stupid), that had thus far been catchwords for the TV critics. Whereas previously these programs were considered “vulgar” or “stupid” in terms of cultural tastes, they

³⁴ Later on, Karashima Kichizō, the chief of the NASP, made an apology for the blunder happened in conducting the survey during a conversation in the Broadcasting Critics’ Conference. “Shūshifu wo utareta haishi shitai teizoku bangumi,” *TBS Chōsa jōhō* 58 (1963): 36.

³⁵ Nozaki Shigeru, “Hito sore wo zokuaku to yobu: terebi ni taisuru hihan no bunseki,” *TBS Chōsa jōhō* 56 (1963): 20.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 16; Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi* 2, 284.

were now attacked as being actively detrimental to the morality of the general population.

The NASP report was the opening salvo in a new stage of the fight over “vulgar” television, the first in a series of significantly more intense interrogations, discussions, criticisms and negotiations regarding TV’s role in society. Notably, this full-scale offensive on TV in 1963 was led by a variety of government agencies. One month later in August, the government picked up on the concept of “expelling *zokuaku* programs” and made it a catchphrase of a full-scale campaign against “vulgar” media. In order to cope with “*zokuaku*” TV programs and “*ero-guro*” (erotic and grotesque) weekly magazines, The CCYP decided to create a special mass media countermeasure committee which materialized as the Conference Concerning Mass Media and Youth (*Masukomi to Seishōnen ni kansuru Kondankai*). Initiated by the office of the Prime Minister and composed of representatives of the mass media community and scholars, this conference sought to counteract the “evil influence” on youth by cinema, broadcasting and magazines. Then Minister of MPT Koike Shinzō asked for the “self-restraint” of the TV industry against “*zokuaku*” programs, and indicated the need to revise the Broadcast Law, arguing that it was an artifact of the pre-TV era that did not properly reflect the problems of television. The Ministry of Education also conducted a survey on TV’s influence on children’s life. In October, the Division of Public Relation (*kōbōshitsu*) at the Cabinet Secretariat released a public opinion poll regarding television and youth.³⁷ Government officials’ condemnation of the “*zokuaku*” television reverberated in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which put much emphasis on cooperation with major sponsors of commercial broadcasting in order to straighten-up the “*zokuaku*” programs. Soon, the LDP invited those major sponsors to a meeting where all the

³⁷ Nihon Hōsō Rengōkai ed., *Yori yoi hōsō no tame ni: hōsō bangumi kōjō iinkai hōkoku 65-68* (Tokyo: hōsō bangumi kōjō iinkai, 1970), 6.

participants came to an agreement to expel “*zokuaku*” programs. More importantly, however, the participants in the LDP-sponsored meeting were also urged to take heed of the “biased” programs, implying that some of the TV programs were showing “politically biased” opinions and misleading the Japanese TV audience, not only by setting a poor moral example, but also by propagating political messages that were deemed unsuitable.

Though a greater degree of governmental involvement characterized this period of the TV controversy, this did not mean that the Mothers’ groups stayed quiet. Senjū Mother’s Society, who was located in one of the areas of Tokyo with the highest concentration of juvenile crime, took the “vulgar” TV programs seriously. Not trusting broadcasters’ self-regulatory effort at all, those mothers sought to evaluate TV programs on their own. They distributed to the members an “evaluation-card” with which each member could score networks’ primetime shows and share it with others. This “evaluation-card” movement was motivated by the proliferation of “ninja shows” that caused children to mimic the actions of ninja and hurt themselves.³⁸

Amid fierce debate over “vulgar” television, the MPT invited NHK, four major Tokyo-based TV stations, the National Association of Commercial Broadcasters in Japan (NAB) and the Japanese Broadcasting Association (JBA, an organization that was built in 1957 as a liaison entity that connected NHK, commercial broadcasters, and related groups) to create the Broadcasting Program Conference (*Hōsō Bangumi Kondankai*) in which concerns over “corrupted” TV programs and their influence on juvenile delinquency were to be discussed. At this conference, all of the parties agreed upon the creation of an industry-wide self-regulatory organization, not unlike the Motion Picture Code of Ethics Committee (*Eiga Rinri Kanri Iinkai*, hereafter Eirin) that had been established for the film industry to regulate ethical issues in movies.

³⁸ Ibid., 7.

However, the participating parties diverged on several fronts, most notably over how to define the legal status of the new organization, how to appoint the members, and what kind of authority it would hold. The initial plan, proposed by JBA, was to establish an ethics committee which would majorly be composed of “experienced intellectuals” (*gakushiki keikensha*) from outside and have a right to issue an “advice” (*kankoku*) on programs ethics matters based on the law. In the face of strong opposition from broadcasters, this initial plan was modified such that the new self-regulatory program committee would be constituted with representatives of the broadcasters in addition to intellectuals outside the industry. Moreover, its main function was limited to conducting research on public opinions about TV programs and providing feedback, rather than admonishment, for the broadcasters. In the end, based on such a moderate plan, the Broadcasting Program Improvement Committee (*Hōsō Bangumi Kōjō Iinkai*, hereafter BPIC) was established in January 1965 under the aegis of the JBA.³⁹ In contrast to the initial hope that this new institution would function as an industry-wide regulatory organization empowered to make binding decisions as to the stations’ programming, the BPIC ended up as a research institution with little authority to change the direction of the program-making. Although it continued to conduct surveys on problematic broadcasting programs and strove to offer meaningful suggestions to the stations, this new institution remained ineffective in regulating broadcasters who understood it as a pretext for fending off attacks on their programs.⁴⁰

In the meantime, the government did not stop its effort to further revise the Broadcast Law

³⁹ Ibid., 1-19. Although JBA was dismantled in 1969, the BPIC survived by a joint effort of the NHK and the NAB. Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 544. After a series of institutional changes, Broadcasting Ethics and Program Improvement Organization (*Hōsō Rinri Bangumi Kōjō kikō*, BPD), was established in 2003, and has been in operation up to now. See “Genzai made no rekishi,” Broadcasting Ethics & Program Improvement Organization, accessed May 28, 2017, http://www.bpo.gr.jp/?page_id=1074.

⁴⁰ Takada Motosaburō and Ishibashi Tsuneyoshi, “Bangumi kōjō no airo wo saguru,” *Masukomi bunka* 33 (1974): 5; Sanuka, Sumii and Ueda, “Zadankai: Teizoku bangumi no mou hitotsu no kao”, 62.

in order to obtain authority that would surpass the industry's largely toothless self-regulation through the BPIC. In September 1962, the MPT created an advisory group called the Special Investigative Committee on Broadcasting-Related Legislation (*Rinji Hōsō Kankei Hōsei Chōsakai*). On the basis of its final research report, released in September 1964, the MPT drafted the second revision of the Broadcast Law.⁴¹ Finally, in March 1966, the MPT submitted the further revision of the Broadcast Law to the Diet. The major points of the draft were: the inclusion of the phrase, “broadcasters shall serve the fulfillment of the educational purpose and the improvement of knowledge (*kyōyō*) through exercising the educational function of the broadcasting”; the modification of the title of the Article 3 “the freedom of program compilation” to “the freedom and responsibility of program compilation”; the addition of the phrase “programs shall not neglect human life and human rights nor affirm crime and violence”, “programs shall serve the cultivation of rich mind of youth, the development of healthy common sense and, in addition to that, the improvement of individual characters” as the principles of compiling domestic broadcast programs; and the establishment of the “Committee of Public Opinion on Broadcast” in order to reflect popular thoughts on the production of programs.⁴²

Naturally, this bill also faced fierce opposition from commercial broadcasters. They argued that the existing Broadcast Law already mandated that broadcasters establish program deliberation councils for the improvement of broadcasting programs. Coupled with the newly established BPIC, they argued, current structures sufficed, and there was no need for stronger

⁴¹ This committee's final responding report to the MPT was a rather disappointing one to the MPT officials because it called for the need to establish an independent administrative entity to handle the broadcasting-related affairs in a strictly neutral manner just as the RRC had done before it was abolished in 1952. This suggestion of the neutral administrative committee was largely pushed aside when the MPT wrote the revision draft. Rather, the activities of the Special Investigative Committee on Broadcasting-related Legislation were important as a battle ground where all the primary actors of the Japanese broadcasting clashed with each other with their own interests in their minds. Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 608-609.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 610-611.

control of media by the government.⁴³ In response, legislators deigned to modify the initial draft. Although most of the interventionist clauses were dropped, in the end, the bill failed to pass the Diet.

In examining the Broadcast Law revision bill, it is obvious that the MPT's attempted revision was propelled by the attack on the "degeneration" of the TV programs.⁴⁴ The language surrounding the bill espoused the ideals of TV broadcasting in Japan—responsibility, education, knowledge, concern for the youth, "healthy common sense" and individual character. Implicit in these legal efforts was the idea that TV broadcasting had certain social responsibilities to fulfill and the current state of the television fell far below these ideals. In the two major legislative efforts to revise the Broadcast Law, one in 1959 and the other in 1966, the MPT utilized the language of morality and social responsibility to urge the clean-up of the "vulgar" TV programs. However, when one takes a closer look at the clauses of the revision, it is not difficult to see the revision efforts were no less motivated by the MPT's desire to exert more extensive supervision and discipline of Japanese broadcasting.

The question then becomes, what did the MPT actually seek to achieve by enhancing the supervisory power on the broadcasting media? What was the state's ultimate goal in controlling television? This question can be answered by interrogating TV programs broadcast in this period of heated contention. The Broadcast Law stipulated the political independence of the broadcasting, but this provision did not stop various political agents from pulling strings. As we will see, there were numerous cases in which, overtly or covertly, political pressures were exerted upon TV broadcasting. By examining some of the more salient controversies around TV

⁴³ "Tōmen suru minpōkai no mondaiten," *Minkan hōsō*, May 3, 1966, 2.

⁴⁴ Ōki Hiroshi, "Tasū iken to shōsū iken," *Gekkan nihon terebi* 79 (1965): 35.

programs in this period—some of which occurred only behind the scenes—we can better understand the state’s agenda in regulating television.

Between the Only Child and the Exempted One

Political intervention in broadcast programming in the 1950s and 1960s of Japan has been thoroughly studied by many scholars, and thanks to their efforts, many cases of the infringement of the freedom of speech were discovered.⁴⁵ But their analysis tends to be based on the assumption that there is an absolute value of the freedom of speech, and the intervention of any outside authority is problematic if it breaches that sacred value. While I agree that the freedom of speech must be protected vigorously, the scholarship has its limitations. They define these political interventions as “manipulation of public opinion” (*seron sōsa*); however, simply denouncing the “interference” in these terms leaves aside the question, manipulated *how*? To what ends? What was the agenda of the “invisible hand” beyond the fact that the government was willing to violate freedom of speech? There are the questions I would like to explore by examining some of well-known cases of political intervention in the TV programs in 1960s.

The government’s “invisible hand” was suddenly active once Japan recovered its sovereignty. In 1954, a popular NHK radio variety show, *Yūmoa gekijō* (Humor Theater) was discontinued because of outside pressure.⁴⁶ Having been launched in 1947, it was one of the most popular radio shows in NHK, especially well-known for its scathing satire on current political and social issues. When the shipbuilding bribery scandal broke in 1954 and, to the

⁴⁵ Representative works in this category are Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 1*, 1980; Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 2*, 1981; Kido ed., *Kōza gendai jōnarizumu 3*; Fujita Keiichi, *Sugao no hōsōshi* (Tokyo: Shin Nihon Shuppansha, 1969).

⁴⁶ For the details of the *Yūmoa Gekijō* case, see Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Hōsō 50-nenshi*, 347-349, Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 331-332 and Fujita, *Sugao no hōsōshi*, 107-111.

dismay of Nagata-chō, roused anti-government sentiments, one episode of the *Yūmoa gekijō* sent on the airwaves a poignant comment, “Diet members were behind the scene of the crime,” which upset many Diet members. In response to the seething anger in the Diet, the then Minister of MPT, Tsukada Jūichirō, commented on the current situation of NHK,

Ministers are saying “recent NHK programs are making fun of the government and the Diet.” We agreed on the increase of the NHK receiving fee from ¥50 to ¥70, but at that time I also added “the majority of the ministers believe NHK don’t deserve such increase as far as the current state of the broadcasting continues.” I am not saying that NHK should speak for the government, but I believe it should more thoroughly inform the national policies to the people in Japan. In order to transform the nature of the NHK to that direction, the MPT is currently working through the inter-ministry committee of the revision of the Broadcast Law. We expect that the committee can come up with a bill as early as the next Diet session.

Shortly after this statement, *Yūmoa gekijō* dropped its satirical parts. This sudden change aroused suspicions that the government had directly intervened, but no concrete evidence was forthcoming. As the shipbuilding bribery scandal further unfolded to the extent that the arrest of the Secretary-General of the Liberal Party, Satō Eisaku, was blocked by the exercise of the Minister of Justice’s “right of command,” *Yūmoa gekijō* did not miss this chance to criticize the political corruption, and came up with a brilliant satire, using the name of the corrupted big-shot politician and its party, “Liberal Sugar Production Corporation (*Jiyū Seitō Kabushikigaisha*)

processes the black sugar (*satō*) in various ways to produce white sugar.”⁴⁷ No doubt this audacity set fire in the Nagata-chō, and this proved to be one of the last bits of pointed political humor on the program. Without the political satire at the heart of the program, its popularity plummeted. In a couple of months it was taken off the air.

The *Yūmoa gekijō* case set the precedent for what would come later. Politicians and bureaucrats realized that unregulated broadcasting programs could damage their vested interests. Although the law prevented any formal censorship from happening, when a TV program drew the attentions of governmental officials, they were able to exert influence on the stations via informal routes. The official stance of the stations and bureaucrats in question remained, “the decision on the program has nothing to do with any kind of political pressure.” Even in the case of *Yūmoa gekijō*, it was not clear whether the show’s discontinuation was due to outside pressure. All the time, the result fulfilled the wishes of the disgruntled bureaucrats.

In the TV age, more and more programs got on the nerves of the people in Nagata-chō. In 1962, the RKB Mainichi, a Fukuoka-based commercial station which was a part of the Japan News Network (JNN)⁴⁸ family, produced a serial drama, *Hitorikko* (The Only Child). This drama depicts a married couple fighting over whether or not to allow their only son to go to the National Defense Academy (NDA) of Japan, a sure way to become an officer of the Self-Defense Force (SDF). This drama distinguished itself that it directly addressed the existence of the SDF, one of the most politically sensitive issues in this period. Before it went on the air, however, Toshiba withdrew from sponsoring the show. The motives behind the abrupt decision were investigated from many angles by those who wanted to put this show back on the airwave. First

⁴⁷ This phrase used two puns: Liberal Sugar Production (Jiyū Seitō) to imply the Liberal Party (Jiyū tō) and black sugar (*satō*) to imply Satō Eisaku in corruption.

⁴⁸ This multi-station network was established around TBS in Tokyo and ABC in Osaka as “key stations.”

of all, Toshiba was among the top five corporations in Japan's defense industry. Later on, it was revealed that the decision was made by the CEO of Toshiba who told the president of RKB Mainichi that "we will quit sponsoring *Hitorikko*. Please don't ask why." But further investigation discovered that the pressure to withdraw came from several other sources. The president of TBS, the leader of JNN to which RKB Mainichi belonged, also made a phone call to RKB Mainichi to make it clear that the network would not accept that program. Outside the TV community, the NDA, Defense Agency, Japan Business Federation (*Keidanren*) and a number of right-wing groups worked vigorously to stop the serial drama from going on the air. Toshiba's retraction notwithstanding, the production team went on to produce this show, but there was no way they could broadcast it with such powerful pushback. Interestingly, the workers of RKB Mainichi stood up for the broadcasting of this drama. All labor unions under RKB Mainichi-affiliated companies attempted to negotiate with the leadership to bring the show to television, even without sponsors. The management of RKB Mainichi decided to send *Hitorikko* to the internal program deliberation council, which in turn stated that "this drama was not well-made enough to send it to the National Arts Festival." It was true that *Hitorikko* was produced with the participation in the National Arts Festival (*Geijutsusai*) in mind. However, obviously it did not have to participate in the National Arts Festival to be broadcast. Based on this verdict, the management of RKB Mainichi made a final decision to cancel its broadcasting.⁴⁹

The Japan Federation of Commercial Broadcast Workers' Unions (hereafter FCBWU) also supported the RKB Mainichi union, criticizing Toshiba's decision and urging RKB Mainichi to broadcast *Hitorikko*. At this juncture, the call for broadcasting the show went beyond the

⁴⁹ Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 2*, 247-254; "Hitorikko hōsōchūshi wo megutte," *Minpōrōren*, February 25, 1963, 5.

individual broadcasting station, as a nation-wide movement emerged in support of the freedom to broadcast without politically motivated interference. Rallies to support *Hitorikko* took place in the seven major cities of Japan, and the FCBWU were able to gather 40,000 signatures for the broadcasting of *Hitorikko* until July 1963. Although *Hitorikko* was not broadcast on TV, press previews were held by the RKB Mainichi union, and members of mass media participated. This drama was also made available to the public in the form of a slide show, which was a part of the “bringing back *Hitorikko*” movement across the country. In 1963, despite the fact that it had never been on the air, it was awarded Special Prize of the Television Reporters’ Association Award. Later, a play and a movie were made based on the drama’s story.⁵⁰

Aochi Shin, who was fortunate enough to watch *Hitorikko* in the press preview at the Tokyo office of the RKB Mainichi, noted that, contrary to people’s expectations, the show’s treatment of the SDF was sensitive and balanced.⁵¹ Perhaps this impression was closer to the truth, at least in terms of tone. In the meantime, the synopsis of the drama, published on the FCBWU’s official journal, *Minpōrōren*, gives us a better sense of the plot.

The only son, Shinji, is a high school third-grader preparing for the college entrance exam. He wants to study engineering in college, but his father, Daisuke, a former war correspondent, hopes that his son would go to the NDA and become a proud officer of the SDF. Urged by the father, Shinji takes and passes the test of the NDA, much to Daisuke’s delight. In the meantime, Shinji’s mother, Tomi, is disturbed by the news, as it recalls the death of her first son and Shinji’s older brother Seiichi, who died during the war as a kamikaze pilot. Daisuke often says that Seiichi died honorably and became a military god (*gunshin*), so there is nothing to be sad about;

⁵⁰ Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 2*, 256-260.

⁵¹ Aochi Shin, “Hitorikko hōsō chūshi no kage ni,” *Sekai* 206 (1963): 186.

in contrast, since Seiichi's death, Tomi always regretted having sent her son to the Naval Aviator Training School.

Shinji does not know what to do with the admission letter from NDA. His friend Shirai also seeks to go to the NDA, but for practical reasons: He will learn useful techniques. The graduation of the NDA comes with only one year of mandatory service at the SDF. After the one year, Shirai reasons, he can quit the SDF and become a technician. To him, the NDA is not much different than any other course of study. Shinji's teacher Ueda tells him that Shirai's thought is not entirely wrong, but as soon as one has joined such an organization, the group identity tends to overwhelm him. At the same time, Shinji's other friend, Kyoko, who works as a bus conductor, strongly opposes Shinji's entrance into the NDA. Having lost her parents in the war, she firmly believes that the SDF will only cause more suffering, notwithstanding its stated purpose of self-defense.

After much deliberation, Shinji finally gives up on the idea of entering the NDA and decides to attend an ordinary engineering college. His decision enrages Daisuke. But when Daisuke explodes with anger, Tomi steps up and declares that she will never send her son along the same path her first son traveled. This makes Daisuke all the more furious, but with wife and son united against him, he comes to accept, however grudgingly, that there is nothing he can do.⁵²

From the synopsis, it is clear that the drama problematizes the presence of the SDF by explicitly linking it to the memory of the war. Furthermore, the drama portrays the protagonist's father, Daisuke, as a diehard militarist, someone who believes the agricultural reforms ruined his life, who loves reading *Daitōasenshi* (known for glorifying Japan's past war effort), and who takes pride in his older son's death. Overall, *Hitorikko* is not interested in giving audiences a

⁵² "Terebi drama hitorikko arasuji," *Minpōrōren*, February 25, 1963, 3-4.

“balanced” view concerning the issues of Japan’s war and peace and rearmament in the form of the SDF. Through a family drama, *Hitorikko* depicts Japan whose history is colored by militarism and war from which the nation still had not fully escaped.

Regarding *Hitorikko*, the labor unions fought explicitly for the freedom of expression. Above all things, they protested the injustice by which a thought-provoking TV program was unduly oppressed by outside pressures, and they, as media workers, decided not to keep silent. They conducted their protests so as to expose as many people as possible to this drama on the basis of people’s “right to know”. The union protestors’ effort failed to bring this show back to television, but this incident was to be remembered as the first event in which interference in broadcasting by the “invisible hand” of the government provoked nation-wide concern about how to protect the freedom of speech.⁵³ From the RKB Mainichi labor union to the FCBWU, the *Hitorikko* movement was the first occasion in which media workers protested regarding programs rather than fighting wages and working conditions.⁵⁴ It would soon become evident that *Hitorikko* was only the beginning of a long struggle for the “freedom of broadcasting.” At the same time, the nation-wide *Hitorikko* movement can be interpreted as a case in point for the power of TV programs, especially serial drama, to create a discourse on broader social and political questions. This time, the discussion revolved around the memory of the Asia-Pacific War, Japan’s national defense, and the meaning of the postwar peace.

Despite the protests, similar interventions would occur at other stations. In August 1966, one of the long-lived dramas of NET, *Hanketsu* (Judgment), broadcast beginning in June 1962, was discontinued abruptly. Each episode of this weekly courtroom drama featured a complete

⁵³ Suzuki Hitoshi, “Nihon no shichōsha undō,” *Hōsō hihyō* 53 (1972): 25.

⁵⁴ Gushima Yōichi, “Hitorikko yo, tsuyoku takumashiku ikiro,” *Minpōrōren*, June 20, 1969, 2.

story about a legal case, often ones that involved politically sensitive issues. Therefore, the production team had to wrestle with “complaints,” and sometimes had to cancel the broadcasting itself because of it. For example, in May 1965 one episode titled “Sayoko no niwa” (Sayoko’s Garden), about the selection and screening of textbooks, was removed from the schedule.⁵⁵ Another episode involved the importation of American non-fat dry milk for the meals of school students, a new aspect of school lunches that had brought controversy, as school children did not like the taste of it and parents said it was produced for animal food in the United States.

This episode was set at a countryside branch school in Nagano prefecture, where fresh milk is abundant. However, the school children had to drink milk imported from the United States, due to an order of the school principal and the local education board. A pupil of this school, Tetsuo, abhorred the taste of the American milk. So he sneaked out of the school lunch and ate poison fruit, which caused his death.

In the middle of shooting the episode, the directing staff were brought before the executives of NET. Not long after, they emerged with a revised script, and resumed shooting. In the rewritten script, the problem of imported U.S. milk was dropped; the whole disturbance was depicted as a mishap of the management of school lunch. With the “imported U.S. milk” angle gone, the central plot of the whole episode disintegrated.⁵⁶

In 1966, the NET executives decided to stop the series, as the “complaints” were becoming unbearable. Almost 10% of the scripts invited some kind of “compliant,” prompting revision. But the station plainly announced that the cessation of *Hanketsu* was due to low ratings rather than

⁵⁵ Takeda Fumio, “Kizudarake no rekishi datta terebi dorama hanketsu,” *Bunka hyōron* 95 (1969): 183.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 181.

any kind of political pressure.⁵⁷

Just as *Hitorikko* did, the discontinuation of this drama drew many sympathizers. Eminent figures in the cultural industry gathered together to create “Association to Wish the Continuation of Drama *Hanketsu*.” (*Dorama Hanketsu no Keizoku wo Nozomu Kai*) This was followed by the creation of “Association to Defend *Hanketsu*” (*Hanketsu wo Mamoru Kai*) by the drama’s outside staff and fans. They strove to spread the movement across the country and push for the resumption of the drama but, as in the case of *Hitorikko*, their hope never came true.⁵⁸

Sometimes, cruel and graphic scenes invited oppression. In May 1965, NTV’s documentary *Minami betonamu kaihei daitai senki* (Account of a Vietnamese Marine Battalion) provoked the Chief Cabinet Secretary Hashimoto Tomisaburō, who made a phone call to the president of NTV, saying “the scenes are too cruel.”⁵⁹ It was true that the documentary contained a graphic scene where the camera captured a head of a suspected guerilla who had been decapitated by South Vietnamese forces. As a result, the rerun of the documentary was cancelled along with the sequels.⁶⁰ Although the Chief Cabinet Secretary called into question the graphic nature of the scenes in question, it was also possible that he did not agree to the idea that a Vietnamese guerilla could be described as a victim while South Vietnamese forces were depicted as victimizers.⁶¹

Other than these cases, many other small and large interruptions took place in the 1960s, and made conscious TV viewers believe that they should not take the freedom of speech for

⁵⁷ Shiga Nobuo, *Terebi bangumi kotohajime: sōseiki no terebi bangumi 25-nenshi* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2008), 240.

⁵⁸ Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 2*, 347.

⁵⁹ On details of this program, see Shiga Nobuo, *Shōwa terebi hōsōshi-jō* (Tokyo: Hayakawa Shobō, 1990), 340-351 and Shiga, *Terebi bangumi kotohajime*, 248-249.

⁶⁰ Kido ed., *Kōza gendai jōnarizumu 3*, 89; Chun, “A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots”?, 196.

⁶¹ Shiga, *Terebi bangumi kotohajime*, 249.

granted.⁶² By the late 1960s, it became clear that the government's policies on broadcasting were anything but laissez-faire. If necessary, bureaucrats and Diet members, hand-in-hand with powerful business community and sometimes with right-wing activists, would go to great lengths to interfere in the broadcasting process. At the same time, it was not easy to make phone calls and have secret meetings in order to mobilize personal connections to sack TV programs, which often could raise the question, who was behind the scene in the discontinuation of these programs? Those supervising the production of programs continued to push for the revision of the Broadcast Law. To this end, the "vulgar television" controversy provided those interventionists with a great pretext for their ambition. According to their rhetoric, without any regulation, the problem of "vulgar" programs would never be solved. Historians of Japanese broadcasting largely agree that the government used the popular criticism of the "vulgar" television in order to expand and legalize its own censorial authority.⁶³ The government's major TV policies revolved around the problem of the "vulgar" or "evil" programs, tackling the potential harmful effect of mass media on young generations, but the end result was the exclusion of politically sensitive programs that simply got on the nerves of the government.

However, a series of intervention did not mean that the government would only passively check the problematic programs. A broadcasting historian Matsuda Hiroshi argues that, apart from the regulatory and interventionist approach, the Japanese government sought to enhance its image and achieve its political goal through seizing initiatives in TV program production whenever it had an opportunity. In this, the NASP, which issued the brochure, "The Suggestions for the Improvement of the Television Program" as we saw above, again played an important

⁶² For the "complete list" of the "interruption of broadcasting" by 1972, see "Jireishū: Yūmoa gekijō kara jihaku made" in Kido ed., *Kōza gendai jānarizumu* 3, 83-103.

⁶³ Shiga Nobuo, "Shiryō: Nihon teizoku bangumi ronsōshi," *YTV Report* 82 (1972): 115; Chun, "A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots"?, 199; Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi* 2, 282-285.

role by sponsoring several of so-called “political enlightenment programs” (*seiji keimou bangumi*). From October 1960 to May 1963, a total of 202 serial or single “political enlightenment programs” were provided by NASP through radio and television. Matsuda points out that through these programs, NASP attempted to co-opt the popular interests in politics, which had been generated through 1960 Anti-Security Treaty protests, and channel that energy back into the present political establishment. In this, NHK played a critical role. After the Anti-Security Treaty protest, NHK led an effort to shift the momentum from the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty issue to the current political leadership. Particularly noteworthy was a series of programs in which the Prime Minister Ikeda himself showed up to discuss government policies. The *Sōri to kataru* (Talk with the Prime Minister) series originated from two different earlier programs centered on the Prime Minister, the first of which was produced in June 1961 upon Ikeda’s return from visiting the United States and meeting with President Kennedy. After these pilots proved to be successful, NHK moved to turn it into a regular program that came on the air about once a month. The Tokyo-based commercial stations wanted a share of it, resulting in alternate installments between NHK and commercial stations. Due to the agreement with newspapers, discussion on current political issues was largely avoided, but overall, The *Sōri to kataru* successfully functioned as an avenue with which LDP Cabinets articulated their policies to the public.⁶⁴

What we can see here is the close relation between Japanese big business and the government’s PR effort. Corporations representing Japanese industrial capital were also sponsors of other commercial TV programs, and therefore in a position to impact the decision-making of the TV stations. The so-called “iron triangle,” a term denoting the collusion between

⁶⁴ Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 2*, 270-273.

entrepreneurs and governmental agencies or Diet members, was also dominant here in relation to TV broadcasting.⁶⁵ Thus, it is not surprising that those large corporations readily lent a helping hand to the production of the government PR programs. As we could see in NASP's sponsorship of the "political enlightenment programs," the economic circles of Japan were no stranger when it came to the political discussions. Through NASP, Japanese business created a political discourse that was largely differentiated from the popular political energy which had emerged in the 1960's Anti-Security Treaty movement. At the same time, by issuing the brochure concerning "vulgar" programs, it characterized the current state of television as "vulgar" and "evil," thus provided a springboard for the government who used such criticism for the purpose of a campaign for the regulation of TV programs.

Meanwhile, the SDF also adopted this pre-emptive approach in order to enhance its images. While the Defense Agency joined the Cabinet and business community in denying *Hitorikko* access to the public airwaves, it was also savvy in public relations. From 1962 onward, it sponsored many TV programs featuring pleasant images of the SDF. In the summer of 1962, approximately three month before *Hitorikko* was cancelled, a six-installment series, *Rikukaikū wo yuku* (Going to Land, Sea and Sky), which was broadcast in NET from July through August, shocked many Japanese TV viewers. Trying to show cool images of the SDF to youngsters, this was the first TV program that directly treated the SDF as a fait accompli.⁶⁶ Understandably, it caused much sarcasm from those who were opposed to the legality of the SDF. Most important, the broadcasting of *Rikukaikū wo yuku* was contrasted to what happened with *Hitorikko* three month later. Members of the TV industry and conscious TV audience realized that the TV

⁶⁵ For more detailed information about the "iron triangle", see Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1982).

⁶⁶ Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 2*, 355.

airwaves were never equally available to all programs. Programs depicting the SDF positively received a more favorable treatment by television stations whereas a critical standpoint meant that a show was likely to be buried.

One year after *Rikukaikū wo yuku*, in July 1963, another SDF-related six-installment documentary series, titled *Nihon no bōei* (Defense of Japan), was broadcast in NET. The FCBWU, which was vigorously spreading the “bringing back *Hitorikko*” movement to a nation-wide audience, immediately responded with a protest. According to an article in *Minpōrōren*, the first installment of this series, titled “Japan in the reality of Cold War,” suggests that the need for Japan’s rearmament will increase when China develops nuclear weapons. This first episode seems to set the tone for the entire series. The other five episodes are: 2. Collective Security and Japan’s Defense Capacity, 3. Ground Self-Defense Force, 4. Maritime Self-Defense Force, 5. Air Self-Defense Force, 6. People and Self-Defense Force. In contrast to these titles, the article in *Minpōrōren* points out that this documentary series does not confront the thorny issue of SDF’s place in the postwar constitution. Nor does it directly deal with the U.S. anti-communist military security order. This article concludes that, outside the context of the U.S.-led security system, the SDF cannot be properly discussed.⁶⁷

Despite strong opposition of the media labor unions, these two Defense Agency-sponsored documentary series succeeded in going on the air and thus reaching Japanese TV viewers. However, the Defense Agency soon ran out of luck. In 1964, the Defense Agency planned another TV series, this time fictional. A dramatized program, *Retsugai ichimei* (Exempted One), was produced to depict the life of an SDF soldier in a rather cheerful and comical tone,

⁶⁷ “Jieitai bangumi “Nihon no Bōei””: NET terebi kokumin no tsuyoi hantai no uchi ni “Nihon no Bōei” wo hōsō,” *Minpōrōren*, August 10, 1963, 5.

delivering “friendly SDF.” It was produced by Daiei Television and was to be broadcast in NTV. Originally planned as a 26-episode, thirty-minute show, this program was scheduled to go on the air in the autumn of 1964. But NTV and Daiei Television labor unions put up a strong anti-*Retsugai ichimei* protest, with which other media-related labor unions joined forces, finally winning the suspension of the program. In a sense, it was the flip side of the “bringing back *Hitorikko*” movement. These media unions, armed with the experience of the protest for *Hitorikko*, became a driving force in the movement against SDF-related programs; ultimately, they were able to change the course of broadcasting, which until then had seemed sensitive only to the influence of the government.⁶⁸

The momentum that the anti-SDF program movement gained from the *Retsugai ichimei* case was carried over to the 1970s and helped the media-related unions frustrate another SDF-related program, *Shirarezaru jinsei* (Unknown Life). NET planned this program as a 13-episode drama series which was to cheerfully depict the life of the SDF soldiers just as *Retsugai ichimei* sought to do. In September 1971, NET executives first informed their workers about it during the collective bargaining, saying “it will be based on facts, and there will be nothing biased. We can’t afford to quit a profitable program when we are suffering from dollar-shock. There is nothing wrong with broadcasting such a program.”⁶⁹ However, the FCBWU thought differently. In concert with other labor unions and political parties, it started protests against the Defense Agency and NET. The FCBWU made it clear that the SDF was unconstitutional, and this program would breach the spirit of the Broadcast Law which stipulated the impartiality. In the end, the leadership of NET decided to suspend this program just one day before the broadcast of

⁶⁸ Yamada Kazuo, “Gunkokushugi mezasu eiga tōsei e no michi-retsugai ichimei to hakujiitsumu no aida,” *Bunka hyōron* 36 (1964): 99.

⁶⁹ “Jieitai bangumi “Shirarezaru Jinsei” seron to kōgi de hōsō chūshi,” *Minpōrōren*, October 21, 1971, 4.

the first episode.

However, these small victories were not enough to stop the Defense Agency from sponsoring a large number of other TV programs. The Defense Agency also sponsored movie productions. From 1959 through March 1964, the Defense Agency sponsored twenty-six PR movies, and also offered material aid to several feature films.⁷⁰ This large-scale media operation was possible due to its abundant PR budget. Matsuda points out that the PR budget of the Defense Agency dramatically increased in the early 1960s, and as of 1964, the Defense Agency managed the second largest PR budget among the government bureaucracies, following the Foreign Ministry.⁷¹ Backed by mighty budgetary support, the Defense Agency aggressively pushed its media-PR operation, with television at the center of the Agency's effort to enhance the public awareness of the SDF.

In this respect, in the early era of Japanese television, intense struggle occurred over how to secure TV programs which represented one's political and social views while attacking programs of opposing voices. The participants in this struggle all seemed to adopt the rhetoric of "impartiality." Most of those social groups argued that they were the true custodians of the "impartiality" which the Broadcast Law heavily emphasized. The law stipulates that the broadcaster "shall be politically impartial", and "as regards controversial issues, shall clarify the point of issue from as many angles as possible."⁷² The Nagata-chō seemed to believe that some of the TV programs were "biased," therefore neglecting the spirit of the Broadcast Law. For example, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hashimoto Tomisaburō complained, "Recently, there are two types of undesirable televisions. The first type is inclined to left-wing ideology while the second

⁷⁰ Yamada, "Gunkokushugi mezasu eiga tōsei e no michi," 100.

⁷¹ Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 2*, 276.

⁷² Quoted in Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Broadcasting in Japan: the Twentieth Century Journey from Radio to Multimedia* (Tokyo: NHK, 2002), 98.

type is to juvenile delinquency.... [E]ven though station executives read through the script first, it is handled in a left-wing way at the production level. Left-wingers ostensibly argue for the impartiality of the press, but they are in pursuit of the communization of Japan through radio and television.”⁷³ For those who were concerned about TV’s aggressive interrogation of social and political problems, programs such as *Hitorikko* and *Hanketsu* were too “biased” to be presented through television. On the other hand, the supporters of the freedom of expression also claimed that the principle of the “impartiality” was being violated by those government-initiated programs.

It is important to note that this battle over TV programs was intimately tied to social change in 1950s and 1960s Japan. We discussed in the introduction that the TV culture of Japan developed side by side with the transformation of postwar Japanese society, which involved Japan’s integration into the Cold War international order and the social and political conflict over how to define democracy in a place where the memory of war was still fresh. The impressive increase in household TV viewership from the end of 1957 (5.1%) to September 1961 (40.6%) coincided with the most intensive political struggle in postwar history, including the Anti-Security Treaty movement of 1960.⁷⁴ During the protests, TV live news effectively conveyed images of police violence against demonstrators, rousing public antipathy toward the cabinet and ultimately contributing to Prime Minister Kishi’s resignation.⁷⁵ By 1960, with the mesmerizing increase of nation-wide TV viewership, TV broadcasting had already become a formidable threat to the government and the LDP. Therefore, when Ikeda Hayato took over the Prime Ministership from Kishi, he was well aware of the political power of television. Matsuda describes Ikeda as

⁷³ Sakai Akira, “Seijika kara mita terebi,” *CBC Report* 8:11 (1964): 7-10.

⁷⁴ For the distribution of TV sets in Japanese homes, see Kobayashi Shichirō, “Kokumin seikatsu no naka no terebi fukyū,” *TBS Chōsa jōhō* 37 (1962): 3-4.

⁷⁵ Chun, “*A Nation of a Hundred Million Idiots*”?, 215-223.

the first Prime Minister who knew how to use television to the government's benefit.⁷⁶ In the general election of November 1960, right after the Anti-Security Treaty movement, he led the LDP's media strategy in pouring numerous TV advertisements in which he himself appeared and said the famous catchphrase, "I never tell a lie!" Unlike his predecessor, he was very conscious of his own image in front of the camera. From its inception in July 1960, Ikeda's cabinet founded the Division of Public Relation (*kōbōshitsu*) under the office of Prime Minister, and concentrated all of the cabinet's PR affairs, in large part consisting of relations with mass media. During Ikeda's tenure as a Prime Minister, he stressed moral idealism in the service of national integration. In July 1962, Ikeda put emphasis on the policy of "making people" (*hitozukuri*) at a press conference. He argued that in order to sustain the effort of "income-doubling," it was necessary to "make people" who could work for the country in every part of the industry.⁷⁷ However, entering 1963, this seemingly innocent project of cultivating human resources became linked to the cabinet's mass media policy. In January 1963, Ikeda spoke at the Diet:

Newspaper, radio, television are the strongest means to create a good environment for making people through homes, schools and the society. I am looking forward to those in charge of mass media organization doing their best job for making people with the pride and responsibility as pioneers.⁷⁸

In this speech, he clearly asserts that the mass media in Japan needed to step up for the governmental policy of "making people." Then what did he mean by "making people?"

⁷⁶ Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi* 2, 266.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 261-300.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 278

Commentators observe that starting in 1962, there was a clear move within the cabinet toward a government-initiated ideological effort to cultivate patriotism and a general awareness of the national defense.⁷⁹ In 1961, the Defense Agency requested the Ministry of Education that school education on patriotism and the national defense be strengthened. Obliging, the Ministry of Education thereafter put greater emphasis on moral education. In the next year, the Defense Agency revealed an intention to promote national defense-related broadcasting programs in cooperation with the Division of Public Relation and the major broadcasting networks. The public relations plan of the Defense Agency materialized through those SDF-PR programs we have discussed above. In this way, the Japanese bureaucracy publicly deployed a rhetoric of moral education while actually seeking to instill in the younger generation a sense of patriotism and a greater trust in the importance of national defense.

From this perspective, it is meaningful to rethink the government's offensive against mass media's influence on the behavior of youth in 1963, which directly followed Ikeda's speech on "making people." As the Prime Minister himself asserted, the role of mass media was a centerpiece in "making people" in the way the Ikeda cabinet sought to. Among the mass media, television was gaining more significance in influencing people's conception of Japanese politics and society. Therefore, for the state, more cooperation from television was needed to achieve its ideological goal, and such cooperation could be obtained through regulating TV programs.

This ideological effort was greatly intensified by hosting the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, an event well suited for cultivating patriotism. In February 1963, the month after Ikeda's "making people" speech, the cabinet under the office of Prime Minister created the National Olympic

⁷⁹ Ibid., 267-269; Nagasu Kazuji, "Nayami naki hitozukuriron," *Chūō kōron* 77:12 (1962): 101; Itō Noboru, "Sengo kyōiku to ikeda kōsō," *Chūō kōron* 77:12 (1962): 119-121.

Movement Liaison Conference (*Orimpikku Kokumin Undō Suishin Renraku Kaigi*) which was joined by some 180 organizations, ranging from the seventeen governmental organizations to several mass media associations, including the NHK and NAB. Some of the primary goals of the conference included dissemination of the Olympic spirit, cultivating respect for the national anthem and flag, maintaining Japanese dignity, and boosting public order.⁸⁰

As the opening ceremony came near, Japanese people across the nation were inundated by the groundswell of excitement. For the Ikeda cabinet, this was a golden opportunity to cultivate national pride within people's mind. In this, there was no doubt that the mass media, especially television, would play a major role in preparing the Japanese people's mindset for the big international sports event. Matsuda accounts for what the government PR officials' hope on the Olympics was. For example, Kaneda Tomonari, an official in the Cabinet Research Office⁸¹, stated,

In the postwar, influenced by various detrimental trends, people forgot the nation's traditional virtues. Thus social ills such as lack of strong will, decline of the consciousness of improvement, attenuation of public-mindedness, fall of common sense and discipline, has been bluntly pointed out. However, the government's PR took the opportunity of the Tokyo Olympics, an unprecedented national event, to set a large goal, formulating a vast national movement in order to get rid of those shallow harms, to

⁸⁰ Takeuchi ikuo describes Tokyo Olympics as a "created media event" which Japanese power elites used to "manipulate" public opinion. Takeuchi ikuo, "Hōsō ni yoru seron sōsa," in Kido ed., *Kōza gendai jānarizumu* 3, 104-120.

⁸¹ The Cabinet Research Office (Naikaku Chōsashitsu) was an intelligence organization which belonged to the Cabinet Secretariat. It was transformed into the Cabinet Intelligence and Research Office (Naikaku Jōho Chōsashitsu), which has been in operation up to now. "Naikaku Jōho Chōsashitsu," Cabinet Secretariat, accessed May 28, 2017, <http://www.cas.go.jp/jp/gaiyou/jimu/jyouhoutyousa.html>.

achieve the revival of the national morality as an Oriental monarchy, to reconfirm national power and ethnic potential as an engine of the promotion of new Japan.⁸²

In sum, the Ikeda Cabinet's *hitozukuri* policy was a result of the government's reflection on the Anti-Security Treaty protest. The people pouring onto the street of the Nagata-cho were not afraid to raise their voice against the government's alignment with the U.S.-led military security system. With the memory of the war and atomic bombs still fresh, street protesters advocated an identity of Japan as a guardian of international peace. The bureaucrats and politicians saw these protesters turning violent. The Ikeda Cabinet wanted to make sure the public understood the state's policy and conformed to it. To this end, television was expected to play a crucial role because its power to influence general population had been proven through national media events, in particular, the imperial wedding and the coverage of the Anti-Security Treaty protests. When the government turned to television as a tool in its ideological efforts, TV programs became a battleground where differed political impetuses clashed with each other. The fight for protecting "desirable" and "conscientious" TV programs took place in almost every front of the social struggles. But in this struggle, one of the hardest-fought battles revolved around the issue of the SDF and Japan's national defense. Several TV programs, whether they were serial dramas or documentaries, provided a running commentary on the meaning and roles of the SDF in relation to the postwar constitution, rearmament and global politics, which often times led to the programs' premature cessation. The oppression of these programs was, in turn, intertwined with social discussion of Japan's place vis-à-vis U.S. Cold War policy. As many historians have argued, the miraculous economic growth of Japan in the 1950s and 1960s was possible due to the

⁸² Matsuda, *Dokumento hōsōsengoshi 2*, 292.

Japanese government's firm place under the U.S. security umbrella. As far as the Japanese state managed to stay within the scope of U.S. Cold War politics, it needed to take control of television so as to guarantee that the Japanese population understood their country's place in the Cold War. In this aspect, the government-initiated "vulgar" television discourse can be understood as a state effort to gain more control over Japanese TV broadcasting.

Conclusion

So far, we have discussed the development of the discourse on "vulgar" television and its relation with Japan's place in the Cold War politics. Throughout 1950s and 1960s, as television became an important part of people's everyday life, the competition among commercial TV stations grew fierce, leading to the excess of "vulgar" entertainment programs in the broadcasting schedules. While the TV industry sought to solve such problems on its own terms, cultural conservatives and government bureaucrats believed that more decisive action was required. However, in attacking the "vulgar" TV programs, the government's agenda involved more than just cleaning up the airwaves. Through condemning "vulgar" TV programs, the government sought to enhance its capacity to supervise the entire broadcasting process. Such an effort to regulate television took the form of the revision of the Broadcast Law, but ultimately, the legal change was a limited success and the state's effort to regulate television was done often times through "unofficial" channels.

In the meantime, it became evident that TV programs not only offered a pastime, but also engaged audiences with serious discussion of current social issues. Accordingly, TV programs became a battleground on which different political and social desires were contested and negotiated. The Japanese government, after experiencing the political turmoil that the 1960 Anti-

Security Treaty movement brought about, sought to expand and enhance, among the public, an understanding of Japan's place within the Cold War world order. To this end, television was expected to play an important role. The Defense Agency, along with other state bureaucracies, was particularly active in mobilizing television to enhance public awareness of the need to strengthen Japan's defense against the communists' threat. In response to increasing pressure from the state, people who advocated the "freedom of speech" stood up to block these politically charged TV programs and to produce alternative ones that could bring "truth" to the public. Throughout 1950s and 1960s, it became increasingly evident that television would be one of the heated cultural battlegrounds in regard to where Japan should be located in the Cold War in East Asia. In this regard, we can reread the discourse on "vulgar" television as an important pretext for the Japanese state to push for stronger regulation of broadcasting, to quash oppositions to government's policies on television and thus, ultimately, to articulate Japan's place in the Cold War dynamic.

Chapter 2. Performing Democracy: Audience Participation in Postwar Broadcasting

Introduction

This chapter discusses the nature of postwar Japan's audience participation TV programs in the context of the cultural politics of Cold War. In the history of postwar Japanese television, a few TV shows became notoriously known as the most "vulgar" programs of their times, and, understandably, provoked a series of intense debates on TV's responsibility in society. We already discussed in the first chapter that NTV's *Nandemo yarima-show* (The Let's Do Anything Show) in 1956 attracted attention to the "vulgar" nature of Japanese television when one of the viewers received prize money for making a scene by waving a Keiō University flag in the Waseda cheering section in a baseball game with the two teams.¹ Such recklessness led to the first round of criticism on the "vulgarity" (*teizokusei*) of television with Ōya Sōichi's famous criticism that television would turn Japan "into a nation of a 100 million idiots." Nine years later, NTV introduced another problematic entertainment show, *Odotte utatte daigassen* (Grand Singing and Dancing Contest) in which amateur contestants danced crazily on stage to receive prize money according to how wildly they moved their bodies. This program prompted the Broadcasting Program Improvement Committee (BPIC), a consultative body of TV programming in the Japanese broadcasting community, to issue a warning to broadcasters. However, this show was no match for what would come four years later. As discussed in the introduction, in 1969, *Konto gojyūgo-go no urabangumi wo buttobase!* (Konto 55's Down with Other Programs!), which also aired on NTV, completely shocked TV audiences with its "rock-

¹ It turned out the brave person was actually an actor who had been hired by the show. See Satō Takumi, *Terebiteki kyōyō: ichioku sōhakuchika e no keifu* (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2008), 109.

paper-scissors” striptease. This program also caused a huge media controversy, which only intensified following reports that young children at school were mimicking this game.

One feature these entertainment shows had in common was a format involving audience participation. These shows all featured unpredictable excitement created by amateur participants unfamiliar with the broadcasting process. Contrary to regular TV stars, these amateur participants, seemingly representing “ordinary Japanese TV viewers,” appealed to the audience with their freshness and vitality. Ironically, it was the very unpredictability of audience participation shows that drew criticism of “vulgarity” from TV audiences. Why did these wild amateur participants displease so many viewers? How did they come to think that these programs with their audience participation components were damaging society? In order to uncover what was at stake in the criticism of these audience participation programs, it is necessary to situate the criticisms within the historical context of Japanese broadcasting, which dates back to the radio era spanning the prewar and occupation periods. In so doing, I will clarify how early Japanese television’s relation with its audience was imagined, and how this relation contributed to the creation of “vulgar” TV program discourse. Furthermore, I will probe the implications of the discourse surrounding audience participation in the formation of the postwar state and Japan’s cultural alignment with the U.S. in the Cold War.

The Emergence of Postwar Audience Participation

Although it is difficult to determine when the term, “audience participation program” (*shichōsha sankā bangumi*) became frequently used in public discussion, by 1957 it had started to appear in debates on several radio programs that featured ordinary people without

broadcasting experience.² It is interesting to note that the emergence of this term coincided with the first round of criticisms of “vulgar” television. Ōya’s powerful denunciation of “vulgar” programs including *Nandemo yarima-show* led to an overall reexamination of radio and TV shows that cast ordinary people.

In the examination of audience participation programs, critics have tended to focus on two points: the occupation force’s role in creating the practice of audience participation, and the democratic nature of this practice. The initial accounts of audience participation programs start with a few pioneering programs of NHK in the occupation period—*Gaitō rokuon* (Man on the Street), *Hōsō tōronkai* (National Radio Forum) and *Shirōto nodo jiman ongakukai* (Amateur Singing Contest)—and their positive influence in democratizing “feudal” Japanese society.³ According to this narrative, the U.S. occupation strove to open up the microphone to the public in order to demonstrate participatory democracy that it believed had been non-existent in prewar Japan. Such an effort resulted in the proliferation and the popularity of audience participation programs on the occupied NHK radio.

This foundational narrative of audience participation has been refuted by recent scholarship. First, Satō Takumi challenges the belief that the U.S. occupation’s broadcasting policy clearly broke from that of prewar and wartime Japanese government. He argues that, discussing the history of education broadcasting in Japan, the heavy emphasis on education in radio broadcasting before and during the war was succeeded by the allied occupation whose aim was to spread the message that Japan should contribute to the peace of the world by maintaining good

² Minami Hiroshi et al., “Zadankai: Chōshusha sankā bangumi no kōzai-goraku bangumi wo chūshinni,” *Hōsō bunka*, 12:1 (1957); Miyagi Otoyō et al., “Zadankai: Chōshusha sankā bangumi no kōzai-shakai bangumi wo chūshinni,” *Hōsō bunka*, 12:3 (1957); Katō Hidetoshi, “Patishipeishon puroguramu no kōzai,” *Hōsō asahi* 33 (1957): 10-11.

³ Minami et al., “Goraku bangumi,” 22; Miyagi et al., “Shakai bangumi,” 6; Katō, “Patishipeishon puroguramu no kōzai,” 10-11.

relationships with its neighbor countries. Against this backdrop, the occupation ordered NHK to strengthen educational programs for students and teachers just like Japanese government did before the end of the war.⁴

Ji Hee Jung also emphasizes the continuity of broadcasting before and after the war. Using Michel Foucault's notion of disciplinary power that is spread across the society without a center, Jung argues that, while the occupation force publicized the increased voice of radio listeners on NHK radio as a major development of postwar Japanese broadcasting, the postwar participatory radio in fact inherited the tradition of the prewar and wartime radio, which had made extensive use of amateur performance in many of its entertainment programs in order to elicit voluntary eagerness of Japanese radio listeners that could be translated into larger social and political mobilization.⁵

Seen in this way, we can understand that, although in a different direction, there was a certain strategic motivation behind the occupation's creation of the "liberated radio stage." While emphasizing the freedom of speech on radio, the occupation deliberately promoted the practice of audience occupation to advance certain political goals. This media strategy of the occupation was formed well before the end of the war. Marlene Mayo, in her seminal study of the U.S. wartime plan of the occupation of Japan, lays out how the U.S. occupation's media policy was formulated. In the last few months of the war, with the defeat of Japan in sight, the U.S. government was well aware of the importance of educational reform in eradicating militarism and "feudal ideas" entrenched in Japanese society. The State, War, Navy Coordination Committee (SWNCC), which was established for enhanced interdepartmental cooperation

⁴ Satō, *Terebiteki kyōyō*, 47-53.

⁵ Ji Hee Jung, "Radio Broadcasting and the Politics of Mass Culture in Transwar Japan" (PhD diss., University of California San Diego, 2010), 84.

toward the planning of postwar world order, submitted a paper on “A Positive Policy for Reorientation of the Japanese” (SWNCC-162/D) on July 19, 1945, which later became a primal policy statement of the U.S. propaganda effort in Japan.⁶ This paper claims that many of the Japanese share common ideas of feudal concepts, such as discrimination based on status, militarism, and submissiveness to authority; divinity of emperor and the mission of the empire; “extreme racial consciousness and an anti-foreign complex, which, however, is often combined with great admiration for foreign achievements and learning.” This “false consciousness” of Japanese people needed a radical measure of “ideological reorientation.” To this end, a systematic usage of all media in Japan, including radio, was to assume a critical role in this effort.⁷

Based on this assessment, SWNCC outlined a media policy for impending military occupation of Japan. “Control of Media of Public Information and Expression in Japan,” (SWNCC-91) which was subsequently written by SWNCC on August 20, suggested principles of media control in occupied Japan. SWNCC-91 suggests that the occupation force should use media to eradicate militarism and racism, and to provide people with a sense of political responsibility, freedom of speech, and respect for foreign culture and the ideals of the United Nations. To accomplish these goals, SWNCC-91 urges the occupation authority to utilize Japanese radio stations, and further, to produce its own broadcasting programs as well as to

⁶ SWNCC 162/D, “Positive Policy for Reorientation of the Japanese,” (July 19, 1945), RG 165, 014 Japan (cited in Marlene Mayo, “Psychological Disarmament: American Wartime Planning for the Education and Re-education of Defeated Japan, 1943-1945,” in *The Occupation of Japan: Educational and Social Reform*, ed. Thomas Burkman (Norfolk: Gatling Co., 1982), 77-78; Kōgo Eiki, “GHQ no hōsō bangumi seisaku: CI&E no ‘jōhō bangumi’ to bangumi sidō,” *Masu komyunikēshon kenkyū* 66 (2005): 25.

⁷ Marlene Mayo, “The War of Words Continues: American Radio Guidance in Occupied Japan,” in *The Occupation of Japan: Arts and Culture*, ed. Thomas Burkman (Norfolk: General Douglas MacArthur Foundation, 1988), 49; Mayo, “Psychological Disarmament,” 78; Kōgo, “GHQ no hōsō bangumi seisaku,” 25.

provide Japanese radio networks with information that it considered relevant.⁸

In the meantime, an institutional groundwork for the reeducation of Japanese people was underway at the final stage of the war. General MacArthur, the Commander in Chief of U.S. Army Forces in the Pacific, was charged with preparation for Japan's military government. General MacArthur gave Brig. General Bonner Fellers the task of planning information control in Japan. A military secretary of MacArthur, Bonner Fellers was chief of the Psychological Warfare Branch, which had been established in the Southwest Pacific Command in 1944 for information operations in this region. On August 27, he converted his psychological warfare section into a new unit in charge of reorientation of the Japanese public: the Information Dissemination Section (IDS). This new unit took part in taking over the NHK building on September 13. On September 22, the IDS was renamed as the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE), and was moved under the aegis of Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers/General Headquarters (SCAP/GHQ).⁹

In this way, CIE was set up as the main machinery for comprehensive and ambitious operations of public reeducation in Japan. At the center of CIE's mission was radio broadcasting. From the beginning, CIE was staffed with Army officials who had a good deal of experience in radio broadcasting. The first chief of CIE, Colonel Ken Dyke, was a vice-president of promotion and research section at NBC. The appointment of Ken Dyke as a chief of the newly created information and propaganda division indicated, therefore, a heavy emphasis on radio broadcasting in the CIE's overall reorientation project.¹⁰ Most importantly, CIE shared the same

⁸ SWNCC-91 2nd draft, "Control of Media of Public Information and Expression in Japan," August 20, 1945, National Archives, Microfilm Publication T-1205, Roll 4 (cited in Mayo, "The War of Words Continues," 49); Kōgo, "GHQ no hōsō bangumi seisaku," 26-27.

⁹ Mayo, "The War of Words Continues," 50-51; Kōgo, "GHQ no hōsō bangumi seisaku," 28.

¹⁰ Mayo, "Psychological Disarmament," 85.

building with NHK. At the closest place to Japan's only radio network, CIE was able to use Japanese broadcasting as a vehicle for the dissemination of the occupation's policy.

CIE's mission of public reeducation through radio broadcasting was to be performed by its Radio Unit, which fulfilled its task mainly through providing program guidance to NHK staff.¹¹ In the program guidance, the Radio Unit of CIE put emphasis on the following six points: 1) to convey information about Occupation policies through NHK broadcasting; 2) to provide Japanese audience with accurate and balanced newscasts; 3) to encourage acceptance of the concept of democracy; 4) to reveal the war crimes of Japanese militarists; 5) to provide unmilitaristic entertainment and education; and 6) to help NHK democratize radio broadcasting. These goals were pursued with a great enthusiasm by the Radio Unit personnel throughout the entire occupation period.¹²

To this end, SCAP/GHQ had substantial control over NHK radio. On September 22, 1945, SCAP/GHQ issued the "Memorandum Concerning Radio Code for Japan" in which it made clear that any broadcasting contents that threatened the "public safety" or conveyed a "destructive criticism toward the occupation authority" would not be tolerated. Ironically, this memorandum immediately followed "Memorandum Concerning Freedom of Speech and Press" on September 10, which abolished all of the Japanese government's radio broadcasting surveillance institutions. Therefore, once Japanese broadcasting escaped from the strict control of the Japanese government, it fell into a new type of control that had its own agenda of democratizing Japan.¹³ With the reluctant cooperation of NHK radio staff, and with the help of formal censorship that

¹¹ The Radio Unit was first established in Fellers' IDS and persisted as part of the Information Section of CIE. Mayo, "The War of Words Continues," 56.

¹² Ibid., 53.

¹³ Uchikawa Masami, "Sengo nihon no hōsō seisaku: sengo hōsō seido no kakuritsu katei-jō," *Hōsōgaku kenkyū* 6 (1963): 7-10.

was administered by the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD) until October, 1949, the Radio Unit of CIE was able to command the general operation of NHK radio.¹⁴ Staffed with experienced radio broadcasters, the Radio Unit performed radio guidance mainly by creating new programs and providing technical supports. Although the Radio Unit officers worked in cooperation with NHK staff, who were charged with the general operation of the radio broadcasting, the nature of their guidance was fundamentally coercive, leaving no choice but to follow the directions. A case in point was the “quarter system” under which all programs were broadcast in fifteen-minute units. When the Radio Unit suggested this policy to NHK, an NHK radio playwright protested, saying it would be impossible to squeeze an episode of his drama into a fifteen-minute timeframe. However, the playwright was rebuffed by a Radio Unit officer, who said, “you are a person living in an occupied country!”¹⁵

Under the Radio Unit’s guidance, several new radio programs were launched, and popular audience participation programs like *Gaitō rokuon* and *Hōsō tōronkai* were among them. *Gaitō rokuon* first started with the title, *Gaitō ni te* (On The Street) on the initiative of the Radio Unit’s first chief, Captain William V. Roth Jr., and a Japanese American officer Frank Baba, who, with his bilingual abilities, played an important role in the Radio Unit as a liaison to NHK staff. Inspired by *Man on the Street*, a radio program in the United States, *Gaitō ni te*, started on September 29, 1945, as among the first audience participation programs of postwar Japan. The basic methodology was to listen to the opinions of the general public about various topics

¹⁴ On the nature of CIE’s radio guidance, see “Radio in Japan: A Report of the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of 1 May 1947,” Box 5313, RG 331, 18-21. (The National Archives at College Park, Maryland) For details of GHQ’s censorship on media, see NHK Sōgō Hōsō Bunka Kenkyūjo, *50 Years of Japanese Broadcasting* (Tokyo: NHK, 1977), 146-147; Ishii Kiyoshi, *Nihon no hōsō o tsukutta otoko: Furanku Baba monogatari* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1998), 113-115.; Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2001), 201-204, 266-267; Mayo, “The War of Words Continues,” 52.

¹⁵ Yoshikawa Yoshio, “Rajio dorama no ōgonki Kikuta Kazuo tokushū,” *Higekikigeki*, 33:3 (1980): 19-20.

relevant to contemporary social issues. Despite the program's obvious intention to demonstrate the concept of freedom of speech in a literal sense, Mayo argues that the recording of the program was carefully censored by CCD for fear of radical voices that would not align with the occupation's policies. CIE was also involved in determining the inquiries that were asked to the interviewees. Therefore this program consisted of in-studio recordings with an audience rather than soliciting interviews from the people walking on the street.¹⁶

Once the program proved popular, the microphone started to take raw voices of people outside the studio, changing the title into *Gaitō rokuon* (literally means "recording on the street") beginning June 1946. When the recording took place in Tokyo, the stage was usually set up in front of the Shiseido building in Ginza, but its microphone traveled across the country and gave local people a chance to talk on the national airwave.¹⁷ The subjects of the discussions were still carefully selected by the Radio Unit to address contentious subjects and important reform measures.¹⁸

Hōsō tōronkai has also been touted as a facilitator of postwar democracy. This program employed the concept of the free roundtable.¹⁹ Starting out with the title *Zadankai* (Roundtable of the Air) in November 1945, this open debate program involved heated discussions on major political and social topics. The discussion table was composed of three discussants who were carefully selected so as to represent the pro, con, and neutral sides respectively. The first installment presented a debate on the emperor system.²⁰ An open discussion on this topic on the

¹⁶ Mayo, "The War of Words Continues," 60-61.

¹⁷ Selected installments of this program are accessible at multiple locations of the NHK Open Program Libraries and the Broadcast Library, Yokohama.

¹⁸ Ibid., 60; Ishii, *Nihon no hōsō o tsukutta otoko*, 156-158.

¹⁹ "Radio Discussion Groups," *CIE Bulletin*, November 15, 1947, 6. (in *CI & E bulletin. Reprint 2* (Tokyo: Meisei University Press, 1985), 114.)

²⁰ In fact, the title of this first installment was *Tōronkai-Tennōsei ni tsuite* (Debate on Emperor System). In the

national airwave was new and sensational to Japanese broadcasting, but this subject was picked up by the CIE chief Colonel Ken Dyke who had met journalists and NHK staff and complained that contentious debates like this had never taken place among Japanese public. Mayo suggests that other debate topics were also deliberately chosen by the Radio Unit to stir contentious debates and raise interests in current GHQ-led reforms.²¹

This roundtable became another popular audience participation program when the Radio Unit decided to include the floor audience in the discussions. In April 1946, a new format with a new title, *Hōsō tōronkai* (National Radio Forum), was launched. In the new format, produced along the line of a U.S. radio program, *Town Hall of the Air*,²² each of the three discussants was given six minutes to speak, which was followed by a three-minute panel discussion. In total, about thirty minutes were spent on the three discussants' debate. Following the debate, the microphone was circulated among audience members.²³ As with *Gaitō rokuon*, this program also used local places as recording venues, meeting local people to listen to their opinions on social issues.²⁴ From its inception, the agents of the Radio Unit played a commanding role in producing this forum. On both sides of the recording hall, banners were put up, reading that “The maximum freedom ought to be enjoyed without harming that of others—Emerson” and “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it—Voltaire,”²⁵ describing the principles of debate in the hall. These banners were made by Frank Baba in Radio Unit who also traveled with NHK staff for the guidance of the program.

following week, the title settled down as *Zadankai*. See Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 224.

²¹ Ibid., 223-224; Mayo, “The War of Words Continues,” 60-64.

²² “Radio Discussion Groups,” 6.

²³ Ikejima Shigenobu et al., “Kenkyū zadankai: hōsō tōronkai wo saikentō suru,” *Hōsō bunka*, 3:2 (1948): 4. The November 30 1946 installment of this program, available at the Broadcast Library, Yokohama, discusses how much a proper minimum wage would be.

²⁴ Ishii, *Nihon no hōsō o tsukutta otoko*, 162.

²⁵ Ibid., 160. The former sentence was actually spoken by John Stuart Mill, which Baba later realized.

The rules of the debate suggested by the two banners at the *Hōsō tōronkai* recording hall reveals that the open stages of audience participation came with a set of behavioral codes. NHK staff and interested intellectuals had a roundtable discussion on *Hōsō tōronkai*, in which there emerged a general consensus on rules of the participation in the program. First, amateur speakers were not to derail from the given subject and to listen to other speakers' without any provocation no matter how much the opponents got on their nerves. They also had to refrain from monopolizing the microphone, especially in heated discussions. Rather than threatening opponents with verbal and physical force, they were expected to make a case logically as to why they were right, without much emotion involved. A heated debate must find a neutral party that could maintain the balance of the conversation. Most importantly, people's opinions should be independent of any political and social organization in order to be counted as "public opinion."²⁶ Once an opinion was tied to a larger social force, namely, once listeners and the staff understood that it represented a bigger entity rather than the individual, it ceased to be considered a part of "public opinion." Overall, the participating audience was expected to learn how to debate in a "democratic" society.

Audience participation was also expected to infuse radio entertainment with new social values. *Nodo jiman* is a prime example of the postwar audience participation entertainment programs believed to have embodied democratic values. Launched in January 1946 as a radio program, the show still continues to be broadcast on NHK television today.²⁷ This show was designed to open a radio singing stage to ordinary listeners. Amateur singers would perform on

²⁶ Ikejima et al., "Hōsō tōronkai wo saikentō suru," 4-7.

²⁷ After several changes in title, it is now broadcast under the name, *NHK Nodo jiman*. For details of this program, see Jung, "Chapter 2 Radio Singing Show *Nodo jiman* (Amateur Hour) and Audience Participation in Transwar Japan," in "Radio Broadcasting" and Shuhei Hosokawa, "The Uses of Routine: NHK's Amateur Singing Contest in Historical Perspective," in *Television, Japan, and Globalization*, ed. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, Eva Tsai, and JungBong Choi (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2010).

the stage and the show's judges would evaluate their performances by ringing a bell from one to three times. Only a few excellent performances "passed" with three bells, while others had to settle for one or two. Regardless of their result, amateur singers on stage enjoyed the fact that they could sing their favorite songs before a national radio audience.

Unlike *Gaitō rokuon* and *Hōsō tōronkai* that had the CIE Radio Unit's fingerprints everywhere, *Nodo jiman* was created on NHK's initiative.²⁸ A producer in the Music Department in NHK, Saegusa Kengō, initiated the idea of an amateur singing contest. He claimed to have obtained the idea of the show from his experience in the Japanese military, where casual talent shows were frequently held.²⁹ However, NHK had a strong tradition of amateur talent shows that traces back to the prewar period. Maruyama Tetsuo, Assistant Chief of the NHK Music Department and a co-founder of *Nodo jiman* with Saegusa, drew on the tradition of NHK's prewar amateur talent shows as *Nodo jiman* resurrected a format similar to the prewar talent recruit shows. As the talent shows during the war played an important role in uplifting people's morale and mobilizing workers for more industrial production, the postwar version of it, *Nodo jiman*, was also designed to cheer up radio listeners who were struggling to make ends meet, and to encourage "healthy" entertainment that would contribute to the rebuilding of Japanese society.³⁰ Though CIE Radio Unit was not heavily involved in the production of this show, due to its core concept of opening up the show stage to ordinary radio listeners, the show quickly picked up the democracy-on-radio discourse that was created by other CIE-guided

²⁸ Jung, "Radio Broadcasting," 114.

²⁹ Ibid., 75. *Nodo jiman*'s genesis also involves the then Chief of NHK Music Department, Yoshida Shin, who heard about the French radio show from his former colleague in his *Mainichi shinbun* reporter days. According to Yoshida, the French show was also open to amateur performances and included the bell-ring system, too. See Maruyama Tetsuo, "Bangumi tanjō: nodo jiman," *Hōsō bunka*, 13:5 (1958): 54.

³⁰ Jung, "Radio Broadcasting," 130.

programs.³¹ Maruyama Tetsuo states that this show is democratic because it is a “union of the microphone and people, that is, bringing people in front of the microphone and allowing them to sing.”³²

While highlighting the “democratic” side of the show, Jung argues, the seemingly wide-open *Nodo jiman* stage was not for all applicants. Unlike other debate programs, this popular entertainment show enjoyed a relative freedom from CIE’s watchful eyes. However, the amateur performances of the show were closely controlled by the NHK staff and judges, who sought to ensure that the performers were in line with the standards of “healthy and cheerful entertainment.”³³

At the center of such regulatory effort lay the thoroughgoing amateurism of the performers, which was considered the core of *Nodo jiman*’s spirit. Just as the political debate programs demanded participating speakers to be individuals not affiliated with larger political entities to ensure that the participation came from the “real audience,” *Nodo jiman* producers wanted performers on the stage who were “real amateurs,” guaranteeing “democracy” in entertainment. Therefore the participants on stage were expected to perform like amateurs with average musical skills. Maruyama Tetsuo, one of the creators of this show, discusses the charm of the show in which ordinary people can participate even if they “have no training with, or ability to read, a score.” He further notes that “it is ok even if it is an imitation from hearing records. Imitation singing can be passed as far as it is well done. In sum, the simplicity and fairness that anyone who comes to the station can get an audition, coupled with people’s curiosity, makes people

³¹ Shuhei Hosokawa, “The Uses of Routine,” 52-53; Jung, “Radio Broadcasting,” 114.

³² Maruyama Tetsuo, “Taishūongaku hōsō tenbō,” *Hōsō bunka*, 1:1 (1946): 12.

³³ Jung, “Radio Broadcasting,” 138.

swarm in front of the Hōsō Kaikan (NHK radio station in Tokyo).”³⁴ In particular, most of *Nodo jiman*’s popularity was attributed to the poor quality of its amateur performers. *Nodo jiman* fans enjoyed the singers with out-of-tune and high-pitch voices, which could not be found in other musical programs that always featured professional singers.³⁵

NHK hoped that the amateur singers in *Nodo jiman* would continue to remain amateur even after the show was over, as it was expected that performers on the *Nodo jiman* stage were productive members of society who enjoyed singing without any aspiration of entering show business. In fact, there were a number of amateurs who chased success on a professional stage while abandoning their own professions after their appearance in *Nodo jiman*. These “deviant” participants were considered by the broadcasters as stains on the reputation of *Nodo jiman*.³⁶

Jung also discusses how certain performers were excluded from the *Nodo jiman* stage. As Japanese national homogeneity was emphasized in the context of the dissolution of Japanese empire, ethnic minorities who were deprived of Japanese citizenship upon Japan’s defeat of the war were not allowed to apply for the show. In addition, there was a pressure from the occupation censors to exclude foreign songs. Therefore almost all performers were bound to sing songs of Japanese origin. Songs with militaristic themes, obviously sung by Japanese people numerous times during the war, were also rejected by NHK as the censors would not allow them to be on air.

In addition, judges rejected certain types of performances that did not meet their cultural taste. Performances showcasing an unnatural, nasal voice, excessive vibrato and *enka*-style singing were rejected by the judges. A few popular song genres that were deemed “vulgar”, one

³⁴ Maruyama, “Taishūongaku hōsō tenbō,” 12.

³⁵ Jung, “Radio Broadcasting,” 126.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 131-138.

representative of which was *yakuzabushi* (songs with pathos of *yakuza*), were also frowned upon by the judges and the broadcasters. In this, judges, with the help of one to three of rings of the bell, blatantly made an assessment not only on participants' musical talents but also on whether their performances abided by the codes of *Nodo jiman*. Moreover, since judges were active in the preliminary audition, singers who did not satisfy them were unable to sing on radio. After all, while it was advertised as an open stage for everyone, *Nodo jiman* was in fact a space where the postwar version of "healthy entertainment" was being formulated. Amateur performers, while enjoying the unique opportunity to perform for a national radio audience, were urged to conform to the code of conduct that could contribute to the rebuilding of postwar Japan.³⁷

Overall, postwar audience participation programs were promoted mainly by the U.S. occupation as a way to propagate the notion of freedom of speech and democracy in broadcasting. After these programs proved to be successful and the occupation authority found the Japanese public not shy to take the opened stage, the staff of the CIE Radio Unit was exalted. An internal report of the CIE Radio Unit, issued in 1947, asserts the democratic value of the programs like *Gaitō Rokuon* by saying, "Here again, radio has brought tangible proof to the people that they have not only freedom to express an opinion, but also an actual voice in the management of the country's affairs."³⁸ Moreover, the fact that the program's concept of street interviews was also incorporated into NHK's several local station programs was, to the personnel of the Radio Unit, a "real indication of the new individuality of the Japanese."³⁹ Dwight Herrick, chief of the Radio Unit from 1949 to 1951, discusses the radio guidance on audience participation programs as a major achievement of the Radio Unit.

³⁷ Ibid., 122-148.

³⁸ "Radio in Japan: A Report of the Condition of Broadcasting in Japan as of 1 October 1947," Box 5313, RG 331, 15.

³⁹ Dwight Herrick, "Radio's Role in the Reconstruction of Japan," Box 5313, RG 331, 9.

In a country where a few years ago a man had to bow his head because he was too inferior to be allowed to gaze on the Divine Emperor as his car passed by, it is an amazing revelation to find the same man standing in crowds to have his opinions aired on a broadcast. Even more amazing to find him willing to brave the throngs who apply for hearing on the amateur hours (*Nodo jiman*) where he will attempt his act of singing or storytelling and in most cases be rudely out off in the middle by the gong. And this is the third most popular show on the air, with a rating of 58.6%—an audience of 27,000,000 people.⁴⁰

While it was a major goal of CIE to eradicate the remnants of militarism and “feudal elements” in Japan, and educate Japanese population with ideas of Western democracy, the emphasis on the freedom of speech played a key role in U.S. propaganda in the context of rapidly changing global politics after World War II.⁴¹ With the growing tension between the Soviet bloc and the “free world,” U.S. international strategists focused their effort on how to contain the spread of communism across the world. As we discussed in the introduction, Japan was one of the centers of such effort as the U.S. occupation was building a bulwark against Soviet encroachment in East Asia. Therefore, it was crucial for SCAP/GHQ to capitalize on the message of the freedom of speech in order to fight the spread of dissident groups that had a potential of aligning with the Soviet bloc.

Postwar Japanese society’s role as a Cold War theater in which U.S. occupiers’ disciplinary

⁴⁰ Ibid., 9.

⁴¹ Ann Sherif, *Japan’s Cold War: Media, Literature, and the Law* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 14.

mission was central has been emphasized by other scholars. Examining the U.S. occupiers' women's reform program, Mire Koikari notes how the occupation authority made extensive use of skits and role-playing in teaching Japanese women the values of femininity and domesticity that the Cold War containment culture in the U.S. cherished. In these pedagogical programs, perfect performance on the part of Japanese female participants became the yardstick of success; tireless repetition was required to gain such perfection.⁴² The Cold War theater that urged members of the society to perform to familiarize themselves with the ethical principles of the "free world" was also behind the audience participation radio programs. All of the three major audience participation programs on NHK radio—*Gaitō rokuon*, *Hōsō tōronkai* and *Nodo jiman*—were deemed the primary educational channel of propagating the democratic principles of the freedom of speech. In these programs, participants were repeatedly admonished to follow the rules set up by the CIE Radio Unit and NHK.

Moreover, the U.S. occupation was nervous as to the possibility that dissenting opinions might use such open forums to make their voice heard nationally. Labor unions in broadcasting were major opponents of the Radio Unit's radio guidance.⁴³ They criticized the audience participation programs for not treating various opinions equally, and challenged NHK by using the open stages to their end. Union members sent letters of requests for leftist-themed songs to music programs. They also encouraged workers to sing labor union songs on the *Nodo jiman* stage. Such an effort to "infiltrate" the audience participation stages caught the attention of the CCD censors, who recommended that NHK staff ignore or refuse such requests.⁴⁴ Jung

⁴² Mire Koikari, "Chapter 3, Feminism, Domestic Containment, and Cold War Citizenry" in *Pedagogy of Democracy: Feminism and the Cold War in the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008).

⁴³ Jung, "Radio Broadcasting," 142.

⁴⁴ Mayo, "The War of Words Continues," 70.

discusses a report from CCD in 1951 that notes a continued effort for leftists to push *Nodo jiman* to allow labor songs.⁴⁵ The Radio Unit was also bothered by avid communist participants in *Hōsō tōronkai*. The unit officials decided to keep the spirit of open forum by continuing to give every participant an equal chance to speak, but to keep the program from debating “communism” per se.⁴⁶

Audience participation programs in the occupation period were brought to the Japanese radio by the initiatives of the CIE Radio Unit as a means to propagate the message of the “free world” in a country where the war of ideology was already underway. In this, the radio stage thus became a classroom where the Japanese population could learn how to “perform” in the renewed society by conforming to the rules suggested by the CIE radio guidance. Therefore, while the stages of these programs were seemingly opened to all Japanese people who wanted to participate in them, they were under deliberate control of the occupation that sought to ensure that no deviant participants, especially leftists or labor union members, were allowed on the national airwaves.

In the initial discourse on this broadcasting format that emerged around 1957, the two major points of discussion—the American occupation’s role in creating the format and the democratic nature of this practice—must be reassessed in the context of Japan’s Cold War culture. Programs based on audience participation did exist before the occupation, and the U.S. authority in part inherited, rather than invented, the core aim of the programs, which was to discipline audience members toward certain norms of behavior. As for the claim that audience participation was democratic in nature, this we can accept as true; however, we must then consider what

⁴⁵ Jung, “Radio Broadcasting,” 143.

⁴⁶ Mayo, “The War of Words Continues,” 70.

“democracy” meant, in the context of Japan’s rapid incorporation into the Cold War. The message of free speech and democratic broadcasting was highly conditioned by the disciplinary regime of the Cold War, highlighting conformity to the rules set up by the occupation and the broadcaster. With this in mind, we will examine how the public discourse of audience participation played out in the TV era.

Audience Participation Gone Wild

The termination of the U.S. occupation in 1952 ended the period of direct radio guidance. Nevertheless, the popularity of audience participation shows persisted throughout post-occupation radio and carried over into the TV era. From the start, television involved formats that concentrated on audience participation and public discourse on the rules of the “opened-up” broadcasting stage. However, as participating amateurs started to act upon their own impulses, sometimes in conflict with broadcasters’ expectations, the tensions within and between different notions of audience participation and “democratic broadcasting” grew more pronounced.

First, from their inception, the political debate programs *Gaitō rokuon* and *Hōsō tōronkai* suffered—and at times benefitted—from participants’ unexpected behaviors. NHK had a hard time keeping *Hōsō tōronkai* from aberrant participants. As the program continued, NHK staff found that some floor audience participants spoke quite regularly. On the one hand, these “regulars” of the program were criticized because they appeared to monopolize the microphone, which was supposed to be freely accessible to everyone. On the other hand, these enthusiasts also stirred lively discussion by actively offering comments, thus helping the cause of the

program. Some of those regulars clearly prepared speeches in advance.⁴⁷ *Gaitō rokuon* also had regular participants. In order to avoid these “regulars,” NHK only announced the time, place and subject of the week’s program shortly before the actual recording. Still, those fans of *Gaitō rokuon* found ways to sneak into the recording place and obtain an opportunity to speak.⁴⁸ Fujikura Shūichi, the MC of the program, directly addressed the issue of these regulars, whose number has gradually increased: “Right before the recording starts, some familiar faces are hanging around in front of the stage. When a person was selected and guided onto the stage, we found that the person had been with us three times already!”⁴⁹ These regular participants were discouraged from speaking by the broadcasters because, by coming to the radio stage so often, they ceased to be “ordinary people” on the street. However, just as in *Hōsō tōronkai*, these regulars were true fans of the *Gaitō rokuon* and sometimes contributed to the program by actively making a speech.⁵⁰

Fujikura also reported that, because the microphone was accessible to everyone, some people attempted to abuse it for their own ends. For example, some individuals travelled all the way from the countryside just to speak into the microphone: “I’d like to let my villagers hear my voice!” Others wanted to speak in order to advertise their business. As Fujikura reported, at least one or two of these aberrant participants showed up to plague the recording.⁵¹

Problematically, a handful of these irregular speakers adopted a particularly vociferous style. Because the program featured debates, the recording venues of the *Hōsō tōronkai* were often

⁴⁷ Ikejima et al., “Hōsō tōronkai wo saikentō suru,” 8.

⁴⁸ Miyagi et al., “Shakai bangumi,” 7.

⁴⁹ Fujikura Shūichi, “Gaitō rokuon no kikakushitsu kara,” *Hōsō* 6:9 (1946): 25, quoted in Horiguchi Tsuyoshi, “Machi no koe no mediashi: rajio gaitō rokuon to gaitō no seron wo megutte,” *Masu komyunikeishon kenkyū* 80 (2012): 205.

⁵⁰ Miyagi et al., “Shakai bangumi,” 8.

⁵¹ Horiguchi, “Machi no koe no mediashi,” 15.

filled with tension and heated arguments as the floor audience became emotionally entangled with the discussants. Audiences in the recording hall would boo the discussants of the opposite side, while cheering for ones on their side. Sometimes, overzealous audiences caused the cessation of the recording. In 1949, *Asahi Newspaper* reports a *Hōsō tōronkai* recording that discussed the question, “are newspapers telling the truth?” There were three discussants for the debate—the editor of *Tokyo Newspaper*, a Diet member of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and the head of the National Public Opinion Survey Institute. The report describes a scene in which crowds who appeared to represent a singular political party relentlessly heckled all the discussants except for the one from the JCP, to the extent that the NHK staff had to halt the recording. This organized group presence in the audience, called “*sakura*,” became an intractable feature of the weekly recording scene. Members of the leftist parties were especially notorious for their loud voices during the recording, and got on the nerves of the occupation censors, as we have discussed above.⁵²

While these vocal participants also loved *Gaitō rokuon*, their aggressive tactics increasingly threatened the production of the program, eventually causing *Gaitō rokuon* to go off the air. Fujikura mentions the presence of suspicious people who appeared to belong to certain political parties. These participants frequented the recording venue, especially when the topic concerned political issues.⁵³ The political sensitivity of some issues made the recording even more difficult. For example, in 1955 when the dispute over the Law of Education was at its peak, members of Japan Teachers’ Union (JTU) rushed into the recording scene and embarrassed NHK staff. Because of the intense fighting over educational issues in the late 1950s, JTU members were

⁵² Miyagi et al., “Shakai bangumi,” 7-10.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 15.

regular customers of *Gaitō rokuon* whenever the discussion touched on educational institutions. Very often, the recording involved physical fights between JTU and LDP members. In December 1957, a recording took place at two different places, Tokyo and Matsuyama in Ehime Prefecture, in regard to the subject of the government's policy of evaluating teachers' performance. At the recording scene of Matsuyama, two camps on the opposite sides—JTU and the local board of education—clashed with physical force, each side claiming that the enemy had attacked first with violence.⁵⁴

In another instance, in early 1958, the issue of the restoration of *kigensetsu*⁵⁵ as a national holiday ignited public controversy. When the recording of *Gaitō rokuon* on this issue was carried out on February 9 at two different places, Shinjuku in Tokyo and Miyazaki in Kagoshima Prefecture, a group of pro-*kigensetsu* advocates surrounded the microphone stage in Shinjuku, Tokyo, and blocked people of the anti-*kigensetsu* camp from approaching the microphone. When an elderly man from a local area started to speak for the reinstatement of *kigensetsu*, supporters fanatically roared for him. However, they completely sabotaged a student's speech against *kigensetsu*, and even ranted at him, "Shut up! What are you talking about?" In the end, the pro-*kigensetsu* crowd began singing "the song of *kigensetsu*" with the lead of the elderly man.⁵⁶ Many other disputes haunted the recordings of *Gaitō rokuon*, but it was the struggle of *kigensetsu* that gave it the final blow. After this incident, the *Gaitō rokuon* team reached the conclusion that the format of the free microphone could not work any longer, and decided in

⁵⁴ Segawa Masaaki, "Ushinawareta tōron no jō," *Shūkan asahi*, March 23, 1958, 15.

⁵⁵ *Kigensetsu* (February 11) was a national holiday established by the Meiji government in 1873 to celebrate the emperor Jinmu's accession to the throne. Due to its relevance to Shintoism and the Japanese imperial family, it was abolished by the occupation. The movement toward the reinstatement of *kigensetsu* started with the end of the U.S. occupation in 1952. From 1958, legal efforts of the reinstatement began in the Diet and finally in 1966, it was restored in the form of "National Foundation Day." For details of the *Kigensetsu* issue in the postwar, see *Kigensetsu mondai: kenkokukinen no hi seitei wa nani wo mezasuka* (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1967)

⁵⁶ "Sugata wo kesu NHK no gairoku," *Asahi shinbun*, February 23, 1958, 4.

April 1958 to discontinue this long-running program.

NHK's decision to stop this program was not just based on the raucous and sometimes violent nature of people's participation. NHK discovered that showcasing people's honest opinions involved more than just assembling the voices of individuals who were walking on the streets of Tokyo. The Broadcast Law, promulgated in 1950, stipulated the impartiality of broadcasters, instructing them "not to disturb public security, to maintain complete political impartiality, and not to distort facts in newscasts" and "to cover every possible angle on controversial issues."⁵⁷ In line with the spirit of "impartiality," those in charge of these public debate programs paid great attention to how to maintain a balance of opinion when tackling politically sensitive issues. However, it became more and more difficult to embrace public opinion in an "impartial" manner. The obsession with neutrality exposed the recording team to a torrent of heated political debates. In many instances, the MC had to walk a fine line between political enemies. The staff sometimes went to great distance to "create" a sense of impartiality in each week's recording. When any given week's recording was thought to be unsuccessful in gathering opinions from many different angles, the staff sometimes added other opinions from social commentators to maintain the balance, which defied the spirit of the opening-up of the microphone.⁵⁸

The question of impartiality also created trouble for *Hōsō tōronkai*. Since this program invited three rather than two discussants each of whom represented the pro, con and middle

⁵⁷ Quoted in NHK, *Broadcasting in Japan: the twentieth century journey from radio to multimedia* (Tokyo: NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, 2002), 98. On the legislation of the Broadcast Law in Japan and the involvement of the occupation in it, see Hōsō Hōsei Rippō Katei Kenkyūkai ed., *Shiryō senryōka no hōsō rippō* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1980); Uchikawa, "Sengo nihon no hōsō seisaku: jō"; Uchikawa Masami, "Sengo nihon no hōsō seisaku: sengo hōsō seido no kakuritsu katei-ge," *Hōsōgaku kenkyū* 11 (1963); Uchikawa Masami, "Senryōka no hōsō seido kaikaku," in *Nihon senryō no kenkyū*, ed. Sakamoto Yoshikazu and R.E. Wōdo (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1987).

⁵⁸ "Sugata wo kesu NHK no gairōku," 4.

ground, the producer had a hard time finding three individuals who were ideally suited to the three categories on a weekly basis. The third category of “the middle ground” particularly imposed a great burden on the NHK staff. When arguments became intense, it was hard to find a middle ground between polarizing opinions. Even if producers managed to invite a person who could be fair between two opposing sides, radio listeners and floor audiences did not like the neutral voice because, in many cases, the “neutral” discussant had a hard time making a “good speech.” Even if they made a nice speech, it usually failed to “intrigue” audience.⁵⁹

The NHK staff made every effort to ensure that the participating radio audiences played by the rules discussed above. Unfortunately, these rules were harder to enforce than NHK and the CIE anticipated. Once the microphone was open to the public, the participants wasted no time in making their voices heard on the national radio. This led to the fierce competition of “free speech.” With the tumultuous political and social transformations that early postwar Japan witnessed, the recordings on the street and in public halls greatly suffered from violent contentions that ignored the “rules of the free discussion.” Soon, NHK found that discussions on politically heated issues were easy prey to the larger political entities.

In the meantime, talent shows with audience participation became the centerpiece of “vulgar” broadcasting programs. Following the success of *Nodo jiman*, many commercial radio stations adopted amateur participation into their popular entertainment shows.⁶⁰ Like radio, television also made extensive use of amateur participation, giving rise to several *Nodo jiman*-type shows.⁶¹ But television as a visual media offered a different twist to the genre, highlighting the visuality of amateur performance. In a sense, these TV shows inherited the tradition of *Nodo*

⁵⁹ Miyagi et al., “Shakai bangumi,” 7.

⁶⁰ “Rajio tokyo kyūnenrai no ninki bangumi,” *KRT Chōsa jōhō* 19 (1960): 8-9; Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 321; Chūbu Nihon Hōsō Kabushiki Gaisha, *Minkan hōsōshi* (Tokyo: Shikisha, 1959), 189.

⁶¹ Tsuganezawa Toshihiro, “Shichōsha sankā bangumi no miryoku wo saguru,” *YTV Report* 37 (1965): 10.

jiman's amateur participation, inviting ordinary people onto the stage and allowing them to compete using their performative talents. Yet, the focus of these shows was directed to wild bodily performances. These performance-centered talent shows, which were also called “vitality” shows, included *Abekku utagassen* (Couples' Singing Competition) and *Odotte utatte daigassen* (The Dancing and Singing Big Contest).

Abekku utagassen, started in 1962 on NTV, was considered commercial TV's first hit audience participation show that challenged NHK's stronghold. Scheduled to be broadcast in the same time slot as NHK's *Watashi no himitsu* which was the “king of Monday evening,” the new program gradually took over the throne, anticipating the rise of commercial audience participation shows in the middle of 1960s.⁶² Like other *Nodo jiman*-inspired shows, *Abekku utagassen* invited amateur performances to compete for a prize awarded by the judges. The only difference between it and other amateur talent shows was that, as the title “*abekku*” (Japanese rendering of a French word “avec” (with)) indicates, the participants were male-female couples. After the famous introductory dance, in which the MC, Tony Tani engaged in a humorous conversation with a participating couple, the couple would sing two songs: one chosen by the couple themselves and the other given by the show through a quiz.⁶³ These seemingly harmless amateur participation shows disturbed some viewers primarily because of the MC's frivolous stage attitude.⁶⁴ Tony Tani, who became a big star through this show, impressed his audiences through boisterous interaction with the participants. With his signature twist moves, and his unique use of *hyōshigi* (a traditional Japanese percussion) and an abacus as a musical instrument,

⁶² Nihon Terebi Chōsabu, “Shichōritsu kara mita shichōsha sankā bangumi,” *Gekkan nihon terebi* 77 (1965): 24.

⁶³ Imano Tsutomu, “Terebi kono iyashikimono,” *TBS Chōsa jōhō* 57 (1963): 23. On details of this show, see “Abekku utagassen (1962),” Shiteki shōwa terebi daizenshū, September 7, 2006, accessed June 21, 2016, <http://goinkyo.blog2.fc2.com/blog-entry-295.html>.

⁶⁴ Nakamura Shōichi et al., *Terebi bangumiron: miru taiken no shakai shinrishi* (Osaka: Yomiuri Terebi Hōsō, 1972), 210; Inoue Hiroshi, “Hōsō rinri kijun to jishu kisei,” *YTV Report* 67 (1970): 20.

he would ask the first question as if he was singing a song, “What is your name?” In turn, participants would respond in the same musical tone. Tony Tani and participants would then perform a few more ad-lib Q&A dancing, before finally opening up the main singing competition. Nevertheless this opening “ceremony” sequence was so compelling that viewers hardly paid attention to the main singing competition.⁶⁵ For some viewers, however, the jovial interaction between MC and participants was “vulgar.” In one newspaper, a viewer condemned the show’s use of a school-aged couple, and criticized Tony Tani’s “indecent” question to this child couple, “Is she your girlfriend?” (to which the boy responded, “Yes, she is!”) All of this conversation was carried out while they were doing the “vulgar” twist dance.⁶⁶

Even more criticized as a “vulgar” audience participation show was *Odotte utatte daigassen* which started in April 1965 on NTV. Unlike other amateur talent shows that focused on the singing performance, this show foregrounded dancing. Each week, four teams of five members came on the stage. Each team’s performance consisted of two parts: one with a solo singing performance and the other with all five members dancing to the rhythm of *Awa odori*.⁶⁷ Because prize money was decided by dance “craziness,” participants danced like there was no tomorrow in an effort to please the judges. Not surprisingly, this show quickly invited criticism of its “vulgarity.” A critic said “Too much of a prank. There’s neither discipline nor discretion. People of all ages are dragged [to the stage] and the entire family makes a fuss to win a prize. I don’t

⁶⁵ Tsuganezawa, “Shichōsha sanko bangumi,” 11.

⁶⁶ Nihon Hōsō Rengōkai ed., *Yori yoi hōsō no tame ni: hōsō bangumi kōjō iinkai hōkoku 65-68* (Tokyo: Hōsō Bangumi Kōjō Iinkai, 1970), 74.

⁶⁷ “Teizoku na odotte utatte...,” *Asahi shinbun*, September 19, 1965, 9; Nakamura et al., *Terebi bangumiron*, 211. *Awa odori* is a dancing performance as part of *obon* festival of Tokushima Prefecture. In this festival, *Awa Yoshikono*, the song of *Awa odori*, highlights the powerful spirit of dancers. On details of *Awa odori*, see Awaodori Shinpojiamu Kikakuinikai ed., *Awaodori: rekishi bunka dentsū* (Tokushima: Dainijūnikai Kokuminbunkasai Tokushimashi Jikkōinikai Jimukyoku, 2007). In *Odotte utatte daigassen*, this song was used as a musical accompaniment for amateur dancers.

like the way this show incites people [to do such things.]”⁶⁸ In this way, for some viewers, it was intolerable to watch ordinary people contort their bodies in “undignified” ways in order to obtain money prize. They thought such a nonsensical party and extravaganza of money would discourage honest people from working hard. Another opinion printed in a newspaper pointed out, “With only two to three minutes of dancing, people receive from 30,000 to 40,000 yen. The fact that such a fuss makes fortune may cloud a sober judgment.”⁶⁹ As was the case with *Abekku utagassen*, the MC’s attitude was no less “detestable.” The MC of the show and a *rakugo* storyteller himself, Hayashiya Sanpei was a master of eliciting the craziest performances from participants. Much criticism was directed toward his flippant attitude toward participants. Viewers found it difficult to watch Hayashiya stressing the money prize while talking with participants.⁷⁰

The two audience participation shows in the NTV network, *Abekku utagassen* and *Odotte utatte daigassen*, marked the heyday of audience participation entertainment shows in mid-1960s’ television. At the same time, they also added fuel to the already heated criticism over “vulgar” TV programs. The critical views on TV’s “vulgarity,” which were believed to have been manifested through the two audience participation shows, were condensed in a formal request made by BPIC to broadcasters, entitled “Concerning a few Television Audience Participation Programs.” Although by no means binding, this request was enough to stir another round of discussions over the meaning of ordinary viewer participation. The request states that some of the audience participation programs, which involve performance contests and prize money, show excessiveness in their content. The statement goes on to detail the problems:

⁶⁸ Quoted in Nakamura et al., *Terebi bangumiron*, 211.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Nihon Hōsō Rengōkai, *Yori yoi hōsō no tame ni*, 73.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 73-74.

- 1) The way of evaluation that underscores the degree to which words and actions that are inappropriate to family viewing are used.
- 2) MCs and judges who encourage participants to speak and act vulgarly.
- 3) The appearance of children in the programs inappropriate to them.
- 4) The way of presenting prizes to stir up a speculative drive.

To cope with these problems, BPIC suggests following points.

- 1) Broadcasters should stop inviting youngsters of middle-school age or below to the programs inappropriate to minors.
- 2) MCs and judges should be careful in their speech and action.
- 3) Broadcasters should stop evaluating the performers by their vulgar speech and action.
- 4) Broadcasters need to try not to interest people in the programs by underlining the amount of prizes.⁷¹

These requests reveal the point of view that audience participation shows still had an obligation in guiding the national audience toward a “desirable” and “healthy” way of life. When these shows did not meet this expectation, they were subject to a steady stream of severe criticism. Even some of the broadcasters inside the NTV network had difficulty understanding the programs’ validity. The program council of the YTV (Yomiuri Telecasting Corporation), NTV’s important partner broadcaster in the Osaka region, criticized *Odotte utatte daigassen*, thereby

⁷¹ Ibid., 72.

sending a message to NTV that YTV would refuse to broadcast this program unless there was an effort to resolve the problem. NTV's partner in Nagoya region, NBN (Nagoya Broadcasting Network Co. Ltd) also admitted that a problem existed in the overall atmosphere of the show, and suggested that the show could present groups from the family, workplace, neighborhood, and other healthy and cheerful communities, which would re-form the show into one that could serve Japanese society.⁷²

In addition, BPIC commissioner, Shibusawa Hideo, personally contacted NTV executives and the program staff of *Odotte utatte daigassen*, and discussed BPIC's stance. As a result, some measures to "improve" the program were carried out, including the reduction of prize money. Ultimately, in May 1966, after thirteen months on air, *Odotte utatte daigassen* was brought to an end, partly because of the popular criticism but mainly because of the drop in audience ratings.⁷³

All in all, the practice of amateur performance continued to remain one of the main repertoires of entertainment broadcasting in the early postwar period. In the occupation period, NHK, under the watchful gaze and tight guidance of the Radio Unit in CIE, sought to present the stage of *Nodo jiman* as an expression of postwar democracy and the source of "healthy and cheerful entertainment" for postwar Japan. When television assumed an important role in amateur participation entertainment, however, its shows were no longer deemed conducive to *Nodo jiman*'s initial dream. The uproarious parties that seized the stages of *Abekku utagassen* and *Odotte utatte daigassen* seemed completely out of line from the strict standard that *Nodo jiman* judges held. These participants cared less about "decency" on stage, and more about doing whatever was necessary for the prize money. The BPIC's call for the rectification of "vulgar"

⁷² Ibid., 77.

⁷³ Ibid., 81.

amateur performances was a request for Japanese broadcasters to return to what had initially been considered the “desirable” forms of audience participation—“healthy and cheerful” performances by “pure” amateurs that would ultimately serve the social good of postwar Japan.

Good Vulgarly?

In the mid-1960s, when the most “vulgar” audience participation programs were caught in the crossfire, not everyone agreed with BPIC in thinking that the shows in question were “vulgar,” or that Japanese broadcasting had to get rid of them. Some cultural critics believed that entertainment shows like *Abekku utagassen* and *Odotte utatte daigassen* were not only relieving the stress of TV audiences but also successfully conveying the true images of people living everyday lives. They argued that these shows should be encouraged because the vitality of ordinary people could be expressed through such wild performances.

Critically, these alternative views on audience participation found BPIC’s understanding of the TV audience too passive. They believed that the media audience had an ability to make sense of the message within the context of their own lives. Here, a prominent social scientist and theorist of postwar Japanese democracy Tsurumi Shunsuke, who extensively studied Japanese folk/popular culture, emphasized the positivity and activeness of the ordinary people in Japan.⁷⁴ In his book on film criticism, *Gokai suru kenri* (The Right to Misunderstand), Tsurumi declares that cinema audiences have a right to “misunderstand” the given cinema text because it is unavoidable. He argues that in the communication of “misunderstanding,” meanings are

⁷⁴ On Tsurumi Shunsuke and Shisōno Kagaku Kenkyūkai (Institute for the Science of Thought), see Adam Bronson, *One Hundred Million Philosophers: Science of Thought and the Culture of Democracy in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2016); Komatsu Setsurō, “Shisō no kagaku no purasu mainasu: Katō Hidetoshi to Minami Hiroshi,” *Risō* 326 (1960); Tsurumi Kazuko, “‘Sengo’ no naka no ‘Shisō no kagaku,’” *Shisō no kagaku kaihō* 1 (1982); Simon Avenell, “From the “People” to the “Citizen”: Tsurumi Shunsuke and the Roots of Civic Mythology in Postwar Japan,” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 16:3 (2008).

constantly shifting in tandem with both parties' changing positions and strategies.⁷⁵ Based on this methodology, he analyzes several popular films. For example, he writes that in a film like *Chūshingura*, a story of loyal samurai that has been told over and over again in different media forms, many versions of interpretation can coexist: the celebration of the Japanese family system; the justification of revenge; and the difficulty with which to create and manage large organizations. To Tsurumi, although there is a dominant reading of *Chūshingura* story that underlines traditional and conservative values, the same story can also teach student activists in *Zengakuren* (a leftist students' organization) a lesson. Just as Ōishi Kuranosuke led the volatile and fierce samurai group with flexibility, a successful social organization requires flexible leadership rather than dogmatism.⁷⁶

Inspired by the articulation of audience subjectivity, another scholar of popular culture Yamamoto Akira defined the media audience's free interpretation as *yomikomi*. While *yomitori* stood for a passive reading of a media message in accordance with the producer's intention, *yomikomi* represents a reading that takes place within the audience's own context of everyday life.⁷⁷ He wanted to show that this *yomikomi* was being carried out in the TV viewers' response to the "vulgar" audience participation shows. For example, he described how an audience participation talk show, *Meoto zenzai* (*Zenzai* of Wife and Husband) of ABC (Asahi

⁷⁵ Tsurumi Shunsuke, *Gokai suru kenri: nihon eiga o miru* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1959), 241.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁷⁷ Yamamoto Akira, "Goraku," *Shinbungaku hyōron* 22 (1973): 52; Yamamoto Akira, *Han majime no seishin: Taishū bunka no dokyumento* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1969), 148. In the meantime, Tsurumi and Yamamoto's articulation of the audience's subjectivity in reading media texts is very much in tandem with the tradition of British cultural studies. For instance, Stuart Hall, using the terms "encoding" and "decoding" maintained that the messages of mass media could be differently accepted by recipients in the way that the producers of the messages never expected them to do. See Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*, ed. Stuart Hall et al. (Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1980). As discussed in the introduction, Stuart Hall's theory of the audience's agency also informed television studies in the United States. See John Fiske, *Television Culture* (New York: Methuen, 1987) as a representative work of applying the theory of audience autonomy to the research on television.

Broadcasting Corporation)—which featured ordinary married couples’ life stories with tactful emceeding of a *manzai* duo, *Chōchō and Yūji*—elicited a range of responses from its fans.

Yamamoto argued that different viewers, while watching this show, broke out in laughter at different moments because they watched this show from their own perspectives of life.⁷⁸ This understanding of TV audience as an active agency challenged BPIC’s claim that the “vulgar” participation shows were badly influencing TV audience.

Furthermore, Yamamoto maintained that this “vulgar” type of participatory entertainment must be encouraged because these shows gave TV audiences room for *yomikomi*, as opposed to newscasts and information programs that mostly consisted of unilateral messages that audiences had to accept without question.⁷⁹ In the case of *Meoto zenzai*, the appeal of the show came from its creation of multidimensional messages that allowed audiences to engage in the show with their own agendas of married life.⁸⁰ Furthermore, the crazy performances in *Odotte utatte daigassen* could be placed within the context of *yomikomi* in the sense that such nonsensical bodily movement could be viewed as an antithesis to the unilateral message that a broadcaster intended to convey to the audience. Yamamoto wrote that when he was watching *Odotte utatte daigassen*, he was overwhelmed by “enormous energy that this radically nonsensical information carries.” He went on to argue that this mode of communication could be read as a stinging satire of the one-way traffic that other broadcasters desired with their audiences. Based on this assessment, he concluded that *Odotte utatte daigassen* was not a “vulgar” program as BPIC claimed, but a “scathing antithesis to moralists and reactionary thinkers who were asking for

⁷⁸ Yamamoto Akira et al., “Hōsō no shakaiteki sekinin,” *Shinbungaku hyōron* 14 (1965): 162.

⁷⁹ Yamamoto, “Goraku,” 52.

⁸⁰ Yamamoto et al., “Hōsō no shakaiteki sekinin,” 162.

outrageous broadcasting contents in the name of public interests.”⁸¹

Yamamoto’s analysis of the ecstatic performances on *Odette utatte daigassen* stage reminds us of Miriam Silverberg’s discussion on the “erotic, grotesque and nonsense” culture of Asakusa, Tokyo in 1920s and 1930s.⁸² In analyzing cultures and literatures surrounding Asakusa, Tokyo’s major entertainment district, she finds that the grotesque scenes of sideshow freaks and oversized foreigners represented voiceless people’s protest against social orders. She also observes that nonsense comedy was used in modern literature as a way to covertly deliver a message that challenged authority. Her discussion on the grotesquerie and nonsense in modern culture in prewar Japan draws from Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of carnival, in which humor, parody, exaggeration and hyperbole in folk festivities had a power to challenge the existing power structure.⁸³ In discussing popular audience participation TV shows, Yamamoto did the same by celebrating the critical and satirical nature of the seemingly meaningless performances by the amateur participants.

Other commentators advocated the “vulgar” audience participation shows because they believed these shows demonstrated the vitality of people living their ordinary lives. Especially talk-show programs based on audience participation attracted favorable responses from critics in this regard. The abovementioned *Meoto zenzai* was discussed as a model program that accommodated ordinary married couples’ everyday life experience. Media scholar Satō Takeshi mentioned this program as one of the most successful shows that vividly illuminated the

⁸¹ Yamamoto Akira, “Terebi ni okeru osaka shiki komyunikeishon,” *Gekkan nihon terebi* 77 (1965): 15.

⁸² Miriam Silverberg, “2. Down-and-Out Grotesquerie”, “3. Modern Nonsense” in *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007)

⁸³ See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

participants' life experience.⁸⁴ He also contended that the dynamism of ordinary people's life could be found in the performance-oriented participatory shows like *Odotte utatte daigassen*, as well. He wrote, "It is necessary to acknowledge that mass audiences are, through a certain form of program, trying to freely and wildly express their energy that has been oppressed by the politically closed situation."⁸⁵

Furthermore, it was pointed out that there was a similarity between the form of audience participation entertainment shows and that of amateur performance stages which usually took place in traditional Japanese village festivals (*matsuri*). Satō argues that although such village events were almost forgotten in postwar Japan, they were replaced by the TV amateur shows.⁸⁶ A psychologist Sera Masatoshi even equated the amateur performance at *Odotte utatte daigassen* to village festivals where local gods (*kami*) were summoned through a ritual ceremony. He asserted that the ecstatic dance performance and the ensuing questions and answers between the participant and the MC on the stage of *Odotte utatte daigassen* paralleled the rituals of village festivals where a medium performed a possession rite that led to a conversation between the god and people through the medium. While acknowledging BPIC's accusation of vulgarity against *Odotte utatte daigassen*, he argued that such vulgarity had been embedded in the tradition of Japanese festivals, and in fact had an aspect of reinvigorating people. Based on this reasoning, he concluded that "[...] if the Japanese wish to not just become such smart people but also rediscover this vitality and re-experience emotion and affection, we should pay attention to the birth of this program which is based upon a Japanese traditional form of excitement."⁸⁷

These alternative voices on audience participation shows further criticized some of the

⁸⁴ Satō Takeshi, "Shichōsha sankā bangumi," *TBS Chōsa jōhō* 83 (1966): 16.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁸⁷ Sera Masatoshi, "Shichōsha ga bangumi ni sankā suru to iu koto," *Gekkan nihon terebi* 77 (1965): 18.

shows that were endorsed by the cultural conservatives as “healthy” audience participation shows. The NASP’s report that I discussed in the second chapter listed a few programs as examples of “healthy” TV programs and contrasted them with “vulgar” ones. On this list, we can find a pair of NHK’s popular participatory shows, *Watashi no himitsu* (My Secret) and *Sore wa watashi desu* (That’s Me).⁸⁸ Commenting on the selection of this list, Yamamoto asserted that these “healthy” programs were neither poisonous nor beneficial to people. He further argued that these programs justified the status quo of the current moral regime, and helped establish the “calm zone” where no contradiction seemed to exist. Moreover, he attacked critics who were obsessed with the notion of “seriousness” as the yardstick of program evaluation, and concluded that “no matter how hollow a program is, if it is given a seemingly serious and intellectual form, it is acknowledged as ‘plus’ value.” In the end, he characterized *Watashi no himitsu* as a “vulgar” program from his own perspective.⁸⁹ Similarly, Imai Tsutomu, a producer in TBS (Tokyo Broadcasting System), also criticized NASP’s “healthy program” list, arguing that these programs were at a standstill and did not show the vision of future broadcasting. He asserted that broadcasting must function as a place of cultural creation rather than cultural transmission.⁹⁰

In sum, scholars and commentators who were interested in the vitality of ordinary people in everyday life sought to find such vitality on the audience participation stages. They believed that some shows that were denounced by BPIC as vulgar could better express the authentic thoughts and emotions of Japanese citizens. In their eyes, “vulgarity” should not be interpreted merely as low cultural taste. Rather, the very “vulgar” images of people could powerfully articulate the dynamics of ordinary people’s everyday life.

⁸⁸ Selected episodes of both of the programs are available at the NHK Open Program Libraries and the Broadcast Library, Yokohama.

⁸⁹ Yamamoto Akira, “Kōkyōsei kannen no saikentō,” *CBC Report* 8:8 (1964): 4-5.

⁹⁰ Imano, “Terebi kono iyashikimono,” 23-24.

The emphasis on people's vitality in audience participation programs also overlapped with the grassroots politics of the 1960s, when the Anti-Security Treaty protest brought into the picture the voices of people who were not aligned with existing political parties and organizations. Throughout the 1960s, these grassroots organizations assumed national significance and opened up the age of the citizens' movement.⁹¹ In this period, Tsurumi was one of the leading thinkers who provided the ideological basis for this "big wave" of citizen power. Reflecting upon Japan's failed war and the national mobilization that led to a total disaster, Tsurumi and his research group Shisōno Kagaku Kenkyūkai (Institute for the Science of Thought) reexamined the role of intellectuals in the new Japanese society. They concluded that intellectuals needed to pay attention to the "people's philosophy" (*hitobito no tetsugaku*), which they believed would help Japanese society put state-centered politics behind, and move forward with the initiatives of ordinary people's voices.⁹² Therefore, it was not a coincidence that Tsurumi and the institute were heavily involved in the project of recovering popular/folk culture, which later provided the basis for the discourse of audience agency within media. The most representative work of the institute's efforts was *Yume to omokage* (Dreams and Resemblances), published in 1950. Through this book, the institute sought to reexamine several popular culture genres, including the novel, popular song (*ryūkōka*), film, theater play, and vaudeville entertainment (*yose goraku*), from the perspective of "people's philosophy."⁹³ For example, a chapter about *naniwabushi* (traditional narrative singing) discussed the origin of this genre, and wrote that *naniwabushi* had emerged from social outcast, and thus come to reflect the misery of

⁹¹ On the rise of the citizen's movement, see Wesley Sasaki-Uemura, *Organizing the Spontaneous: Citizen Protest in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001) and Avenell, "From the "People" to the "Citizen""

⁹² Avenell, "From the "People" to the "Citizen"," 714-718.

⁹³ Shisō no kagaku kenkyūkai ed., *Yume to omokage: taishūgoraku no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1950); Nagahara Hiromu also discussed this book's take of popular songs. See Nagahara Hiromu, "Unpopular Music: The Politics of Mass Culture in Modern Japan" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2011), 141.

these people's lives. It further argued that *naniwabushi* singers were true "people's artists" in the sense that they fought for the cause of the social outcasts by singing their joys and sorrows.⁹⁴ By emphasizing the principles of ordinary people's lives and cultural vitality, the institute sought to find a new source of postwar democracy that radically departed from state initiatives that could easily be corrupted in the face of imperialistic impulse.

From this perspective, ordinary people's "lively" performances that seemed to never have been tamed by the broadcasters' official guidance were seen as an expression of ordinary people's democratic potential. It is in this context that Satō Takeshi, as we have seen above, argued for the *Odote Utatte Daigassen* in which he found an emancipation of people's energy that had been oppressed by the current political situation. He asserted, "the participating audiences are, above all, people (*minshū*)=the public of our nation (*kokumin taishū*). I believe that [participation] is nothing but the expression of people in relation with television. This is an absolutely true statement in a democratic society."⁹⁵

However, the impulse of highlighting people's vitality on the broadcasting stage is not to be understood as the opposite of the criticism of "vulgar" performance. Rather, both sides had in common the belief that they were seeking the proper form of democracy in broadcasting in relation to the audience. On the one hand, BPIC members and conservative critics thought that authentic amateur participation, which had been upheld as a democratic practice in broadcasting since the occupation period, was lost in the commercial TV stations' pursuit of cheap stimulation and manipulation of participants. They believed that the democracy of broadcasting must be rehabilitated by restoring "healthy and productive" amateur performance. On the other hand,

⁹⁴ Shisō no kagaku kenkyūkai ed., *Yume to omokage*, 289-294.

⁹⁵ Satō, "Shichōsha sankā bangumi," 15.

advocates of people's vitality in audience participation also maintained that what they were watching on the stages of *Abekku utagassen* and *Odote utatte daigassen* represented images from the real lives of ordinary Japanese, whose emancipatory political energy was articulated through such shows, and were thus fundamentally democratic. Both sides believed themselves to be speaking as the custodian of democracy in Japanese broadcasting. Here, it is interesting to note that both of the camps invariably attempted to find the tradition of audience participation programs in the pioneering NHK radio programs like *Gaitō rokuon*, *Hōsō tōronkai* and *Nodo jiman*.⁹⁶ In so doing, both BPIC and cultural revisionists sought to integrate the mainstream narrative of audience participation, whose practice was introduced in the postwar period through the opening-up of the “inherently democratic” microphone. In this sense, the seemingly two opposing opinions on TV participatory shows can be considered two sides of the same coin.

From this perspective, it is interesting to note what Leerom Medovoi suggests in his study of identity politics in the U.S. Cold War culture. Examining the rebel icons of the early postwar U.S. society such as James Dean, Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, Holden Caulfield and the beat writers, he asserts that these figures symbolized, through mass media outlets like cinema, literature and popular music, the promise of liberal democracy that articulated resistance to the totalizing power of domestic containment culture. In contrast to a common understanding that the New Left, which had emerged from identity politics, seriously threatened the hegemony of the “free world” by questioning the validity of the containment culture, Medovoi suggests that the 1960s' culture of resistance and containment culture were in a dialectical relationship in which the youth rebel icons became an expression of the resistance to capitalist society, which

⁹⁶ For example, Satō argues that the audience participation programs were the “baby of postwar democracy.” Ibid., 12.

was relentlessly imposing conformity upon members of society. What the rebellious youths represented was, he argues, not the enemy of the Cold War culture but another face of it.⁹⁷

Although audience participation programs were not for superstars like James Dean and Elvis Presley, ordinary people on the stages functioned just like these cultural icons in the Cold War cultural discourse. Here, we can see from the crazy stage performances an impulse that could not be contained by the rules that had been set up by the Cold War cultural regime. As U.S. cinema, popular music and literature celebrated the emancipatory side of liberal democracy, so too did Japanese radio and television, along with other mass media, offer an outlet through which to free itself from the restraint of the mainstream moral principles of society. Amateur performers' unfettered bodily movements on the stage of *Odette utatte daigassen*, as well as the rage of the crowd at the recording of *Gaitō rokuon* and *Hōsō tōronkai*, should be read as an ideological expression that supplements the Cold War culture in Japan by delivering what the containment culture could not offer. In this context, the comments that celebrated the vitality of ordinary people in the “vulgar” audience participation shows also converged with the aims of the Cold War culture: a promise to let members of society enjoy the maximum amount of liberty.

Conclusion

Now, let us return to our initial question of why many audience participation programs were criticized as “vulgar” in the first twenty years of Japanese television. To answer this question, inspired by previous studies on the occupied radio, I first revisited the formation of this genre, and the public discourse of it in the occupation period. This broadcasting practice, although promoted by the U.S. occupation, did yield democratic forms of broadcasting. I then established

⁹⁷ Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005)

that the liberated microphone came with a certain set of behavioral codes, which indicated the U.S. occupation's intention to use the radio audience participation stage pedagogically in order to inculcate in Japanese radio audiences moral values that were amenable to the United States' side in the cultural wars of the Cold War era. The use of audience participation as a classroom where moral codes of liberal democracy were articulated through participants' repeated performances was evident in debate-oriented participatory programs like *Gaitō rokuon* and *Hōsō tōronkai*, in which the "rules of democratic discussion" were constantly emphasized. Performance-oriented participatory shows were designed to showcase "healthy" entertainment that involved hardworking people cheerfully enjoying their performance while excluding performances with leftist themes or "vulgar" elements.

The mainstream narrative of audience participation required Japanese broadcasters to retain this broadcasting practice even after the occupation. These pedagogical ideals were greatly challenged, however, by a new breed of audience participation programs that foregrounded commercial success and ecstatic performances. Bureaucrats in MPT and business community joined parents groups in accusing these programs of wrecking the democratic potential of audience participation, and defined them as "vulgar." Yet, other commentators supported these "vulgar" audience participation shows by arguing that "vulgarity" should be interpreted as the vitality of ordinary people, and that this "good vulgarity" should even be promoted. In the meantime, these two seemingly opposing arguments converged in the sense that they both advocated for the "democratic" nature of audience participation. They both agreed that eliciting public participation on broadcasting stage was democratic in nature, as participants represented the "people" who formed the building blocks of Japanese postwar democracy. In other words, opposing commentators embraced the "liberation of microphone" narrative that the U.S.

occupation, in cooperation with NHK, initially established. The dialectical relationship between the two diverging interpretations of “vulgar” audience participation can be read in the context of the complex dynamic of the Cold War culture. Here, the totalizing impulses of the containment culture were supplemented by the emancipatory rhetoric of the resistant popular culture, delivered through the expression of the popular media.

Chapter 3. Feedback Loop: Wide Show and a New Mode of Communication

Introduction

The start of NET's *Kijima norio mōningu shō* (Kijima Norio's Morning Show, hereafter *Kijima shō*) in April 1964 signaled the beginning of the wide show, a hybrid genre that combined newscast with various entertainment segments. Also called a “news show,”¹ this genre quickly gained popularity and became a part of the mainstream of Japanese TV broadcasting. Two years later, in April 1966, there were some fourteen wide shows across all TV channels, occupying early morning, afternoon, and late-night time slots.² For TV broadcasters, these wide shows were trailblazers as these had been the least watched time slots. TV audiences responded to the live-on-the-scene dynamism those shows brought. At the same time, many of the wide shows were criticized as “vulgar” for their contents. A prominent TV audience group, Japan Television Audience Conference (*Nihon Shichōsha Kaigi*), announced in September 1969, “five worst TV programs,” and four of them were wide shows.³ Many TV viewers complained that these shows were filled with sexual materials and appealed to cheap emotions.⁴ Others argued that the advent of the wide show was a part of an effort to commercialize newscast that was supposed to be

¹ The term “wide show” came from television program schedules on daily newspapers. On those program schedule tables, a one-hour show looked “wider” than most of the programs whose airtime was fifteen to thirty minutes. See Andrew A. Painter, “The creation of Japanese Television and Culture” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1991), 117. In the meantime, “wide show” was also indicative of the shows’ diversity in the composition of various segments within the program. While “news show” emphasizes this genre’s association with newscast, “wide show” highlights its shifts toward entertainment features over time. See “Katō na shuzai kyōsō,” *Asahi shinbun*, December 5, 1973, 20. In this chapter, I will use “wide show” over “news show” in order to emphasize its diversity in form and substance.

² “Gogo mo shinya mo,” *Asahi shinbun*, December 4, 1973, 20.

³ Suzuki Hitoshi, “Jūgatsu, teizoku bangumi ni kokoro toraware,” *TBS Chōsa jōhō* 129 (1969): 50.

⁴ Nihon Hōsō Rengōkai ed., *Yori yoi hōsō no tame ni: hōsō bangumi kōjō iinkai hōkoku 70* (Tokyo: Hōsō bangumi kōjō iinkai, 1970), 116-117; Nihon Hōsō Rengōkai ed., *Yori yoi hōsō no tame ni: hōsō bangumi kōjō iinkai hōkoku 73* (Tokyo: Hōsō bangumi kōjō iinkai, 1973), 115; Ishida Saeko, “Katei kūkan to waidoshō teki sekai: waidoshō janru no seiritsu to kakusan,” in *Taishūbunka to media*, ed. Yoshimi Shunya and Tsuchiya Reiko (Kyoto: Mineruva shobo, 2010), 235.

delivering truth and be “serious.”

On the other hand, many TV fans and critics welcomed this new breed of TV shows. While TV audiences generally enjoyed the excitement of combining live news with entertainment, some TV critics saw in this genre the beginning of a new mode of televisual communication. They argued that by bringing the camera on the scene and making simultaneous interaction with the audience possible, wide shows opened up a new possibility of television as a mass media. In this chapter, I will take this discourse on wide shows deeper into its significance in the history of Japanese media and communication.

Until now, wide shows have been discussed mainly in terms of their significance in regulating Japanese audience’s daily lives.⁵ Yoshimi Shunya places news shows in the structuring of three “national time zones”: golden hours⁶ (7:00-10:00 pm), morning hours (7:00-9:00 am) and afternoon hours (11:00 am-2:00 pm). He argues that TV broadcasting was instrumental in providing people’s daily lives with a sense of uniform national time as viewers started to synchronize their rhythm of life to the TV schedule. In this, wide shows were particularly important in shaping people’s morning and afternoon hours. During morning hours, salaried workers, housewives and their children were all busy preparing for commute while at the same time watching morning wide shows to get some information about today’s topics. When their husbands and children were at work and school, housewives enjoyed their afternoon hours with entertainment-oriented afternoon wide shows.

While I agree that the wide shows had a role in regulating “national time zones” in Japanese

⁵ Yoshimi Shunya, “Terebi wo dakishimeru sengo,” in Yoshimi and Tsuchiya ed., *Taishūbunka to media*, 189-191; Yoshimi Shunya, “Television and Nationalism: Historical Change in the National Domestic TV Formation of Post-war Japan,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 6:4 (2003), 476-477.

⁶ Golden hours is the Japanese version of primetime. Yoshimi suggests that the use of “golden” to indicate prime time is suggestive of Japanese audience’s attitude toward television as a representative mass media of the era of high economic growth. See Yoshimi and Tsuchiya ed., *Taishūbunka to media*, 195 (footnote 35).

family lives, I would like to focus on differing opinions on the significance of this genre in the shaping of television as a popular media in the 1960s. In particular, this chapter will discuss how television, through wide shows, positioned itself in the intricate web of the postwar mass media. By extension, I hope to paint a clearer picture of Japan's 1960s media culture where television, together with other mass media, played a major role in redefining the mode of communication between media and audience, which was considered analogous to the relationship between state and civil society. With this analysis, I intend to interrogate a promotion of a specific mode of communication that also linked Japanese society internationally to other parts of the world where the cultural forces and pressures of the Cold War had a significant impact.

The Advent of Wide Shows

The idea of *Kijima shō* came from outside of Japan. B. C. Peterson, the president of a U.S.-affiliated pharmaceutical company Nippon Vicks, met with an advertising agency to discuss the possibility of sponsoring a TV program. What he proposed to the agency was a program that was modeled after NBC's *Today*, a daily morning variety show that had been well-received in the United States for twelve years since its launch in 1952. While most of the stations rejected this proposal in consideration of high production costs, NET and its producer Asada Takahiko embraced it. Peterson was so passionate about launching this show in Japan that he even ordered a film of an installment of *Today* from NBC and showed it to Asada. At this screening, the NET producer learned a few features about this American show: Live broadcasts from across the country, hosting in a relaxed mood, in-program advertisements, active interaction with the

audience and singing segments. Most of these elements were included in *Kijima shō*.⁷

When *Kijima shō* was launched on April 1964, no one except the program staff predicted its success. This one-hour Monday-to-Friday morning wide show hosted by a former NHK announcer Kijima Norio was, from the beginning, a “gamble” in many ways.⁸ Its production cost was approximately one million yen per installment, which was about five times more than that of a regular one-hour program at the same time slot.⁹ Besides, the morning hours had been a kingdom of NHK thanks to their strong morning offerings¹⁰—*Terebi shōsetsu* (serial drama), *Utano ehon* (a children’s show), *Chanoma no kagaku* (science education for housewives), *Kurashi no mado* (information show for housewives), *Kyōno ryōri* (a cooking show)—which dominated the 8:00-10:00 am time frame with solid ratings. Particularly, one of the *Terebi shōsetsu* series, *Akatsuki*, reached as high as 30% in ratings at one point. On the other hand, commercial broadcasters struggled in this arena, gaining only single-digit ratings with rerun of movies and children’s programs.¹¹

NET, in particular, had to figure out how to win in this morning time because its programs garnered below 5% ratings. In addition, NET did not have such a strong nation-wide network as NHK, NTV and TBS, which resulted in poor ratings in prime time as well. In this circumstance, NET sought to target a niche market which was uncharted territory in the morning timeframe.¹²

The NET’s new show did not fare well at the beginning. It started with only four local

⁷ Asada Takahiko, *Nyūsu shō ni kakeru* (Tokyo: Gendai Jānarizumu Shuppankai, 1968), 25-34.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō* (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2001), 571.

¹⁰ Nakamura Shōichi et al., *Terebi bangumiron: miru taiken no shakai shinrishi* (Osaka: Yomiuri Terebi Hōsō, 1972), 194.

¹¹ Asada, *Nyūsu shō ni kakeru*, 15; Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 571; Takahashi Akira, “Nyūsushō gonenshi: sono hassei to henbou,” *Hōsō bunka* 24:3 (March 1969): 18.

¹² Nakamura et al., *Terebi bangumiron*, 194.

network stations.¹³ In the Kantō area, the show could not break the 5% ratings barrier in the first five months. Advertisers were hesitant to invest in this venture project. In the first four months, Nippon Vicks was the sole sponsor of the program, responsible for a fourth of the overall production expenses.

Despite the low ratings, this show was welcomed by many TV audiences. Other media also started to pay attention to this new show project.¹⁴ While some criticism did exist, newspapers made favorable comments on the show. In the beginning week, *Asahi Newspaper* complemented this show in a column, highlighting the excitement of its live broadcast, “In a filmed broadcast, I feel lonely with a sense of distance from TV screen. However, with the help from the soft but serious MC, which is rare in Japan, this program brings us new hopes to recover the vitality of the early period of TV broadcasting. Moreover, when a big event takes place, we can expect that this show will rise to the occasion.”¹⁵

In August, the ratings of the show finally picked up. At the turn of the year, this up-and-coming show broke through 10% in ratings. After that, it continued to produce consistent 10% above ratings until it reached 20% in February, 1966. *Kijima shō* had become a champion of Japan’s morning television. This show indeed pioneered the uncharted territory of morning time by creating a new audience who had not turned on their TV sets at this time of the day. With the emergence of this show, the percentage of TV sets in use in the duration of this show (8:30-9:30 am) increased from 20.2% to 35.5% in the Kantō area and from 25.0% to 33.0% in the Kansai area.¹⁶ The morning show also created new audience by increasing its local partner stations. After it was launched with only four local network stations, it obtained five more in one year,

¹³ Asada, *Nyūsu shō ni kakeru*, 106.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁵ *Asahi shinbun*, April 4, 1964. Quoted in Asada, *Nyūsu shō ni kakeru*, 123.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 160, 212, 262.

and by January 1966, the show was being broadcast by some twenty-two stations across the country.¹⁷ This strong nation-wide network of local stations not only attracted a wider audience, but also strengthened the production by enabling more local news coverage.

The success of *Kijima shō* was also evidenced by other similar wide shows that quickly followed suit. One year after the start of *Kijima shō*, NHK came up with its own morning wide show *Stajio 102* (Studio 102) in April 1965. Whereas *Kijima shō* featured a variety of segments with talk, interviews, music and advertisement, this NHK version of the morning wide show focused heavily on news with on-site coverage, studio interviews, reporters' commentary and local stories relying on NHK's large nationwide network of stations.¹⁸ Indeed, this Monday-to-Saturday thirty-five-minute broadcast was intended for an in-depth analysis of NHK's 7:00 am main news.¹⁹

The NHK's new show was pejoratively called a rip-off (*nihikime no dōjo*) of *Kijima shō* simply because it was a latecomer, but NHK sought to differentiate its new show from the predecessor by defining it as a true "news show." While *Kijima shō* was also called a "news show" from the beginning, Ueda Kōtarō, a planner of *Stajio 102*, argued that the NET's show was just a morning show as it simply combined "news" and "show" without blending them.²⁰ On the other hand, some audience pointed out *Stajio 102* failed to offer different forms of news reports compared to other NHK newscasts that had been criticized as sounding like an official gazette and thus being on the sidelines on important issues.²¹

When NHK's *Stajio 102* gravitated toward the "news" side of the wide show, Fuji TV's new

¹⁷ Ibid., 211, 254.

¹⁸ "TV-kai in kijima taifū," *Asahi shinbun*, March 14, 1965, 27.

¹⁹ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 571.

²⁰ Ueda Kōtarō, "Nihyappon kara no saihakken," *Hōsō bunka* 21:1 (1966): 39.

²¹ Hayashi Toshitaka, "Sutajio 102 no ichi to hōkō," *Hōsō bunka* 21:1 (1966): 45.

show *Okusama sutajio ogawa hiroshi shō* (Madams' Studio: Ogawa Hiroshi Show, hereafter *Ogawa shō*), which was aired Monday to Saturday, 9:00-10:30 am, stood on the "show" side.²² The host of this show was Ogawa Hiroshi, another familiar face from NHK. This show, while following conventions of the wide show established by *Kijima shō* and *Stajio 102*, challenged them with participatory segments such as *Terefon sōdan* (Telephone Consultation, audience participation through phone) and *Kodomo no kōjō* (Children's Plaza, stage for children's speech).²³ After an initial period of poor ratings, this show started to gain popularity by establishing itself as an entertainment-focused wide show that put emphasis on a few popular segments: *Hatsukoi dangi* (The First Love Story) invited TV stars, listened to their first-love stories, and welcome into the studio the sweethearts of the first loves at the end of the segment; *Anata no teishu wo shirabemasu* (We Investigate Your Husband) took wives' request to investigate if their husbands were having an affair.²⁴

By January 1966, it became obvious that wide shows were well received by viewers in the morning time. TBS also threw their hat into the ring by producing *Ohayō nippon* (Good Morning Japan). Unlike other wide shows that used former or active announcers as show hosts, *Ohayō nippon* recruited Kobayashi Keijū, a movie star who had been familiar to Japanese audiences in various roles as a salaried worker.²⁵ At the same time, this show stressed live-relay reports on the scene, relying on Japan News Network (JNN), TBS's local news network that boasted twenty member stations. However, at the time it was launched, the morning time was already saturated

²² Takahashi, "Nyūsushō gonenshi," 21; Etō Fumio, "Nyūsushō no kōsatsu," *Hōsō asahi* 202 (1971): 78.

²³ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 572; Takahashi, "Nyūsushō gonenshi," 19; Sotozaki Hiroshi et al., "Zadankai: atarashii nyūsu keishiki wo tsukuru—nyūsushō e no shisei to sono kanōsei," *Hōsō bunka* 24:3 (1969): 27.

²⁴ "kyōdō jūtaku wo kangaesaseru: ogawa hiroshi shō," *Asahi shinbun*, September 3, 1969, 9.

²⁵ Takahashi, "Nyūsushō gonenshi," 19.

with the three frontrunners.²⁶ Failing to differentiate itself from other three competitors, TBS's *Ohayō nippon* ended in September 1968.

In the meantime, NHK launched another wide show *Konnichiwa Okusan* (Good Morning Madam) in April 1966. After *Stajio 102* met morning time viewers with news-oriented stories from 7:25 to 8:00 am, *Konnichiwa Okusan*, for fifty-five minutes from 8:45 am, took a “life-show” approach by discussing housewives’ life issues with a more relaxed vibe.²⁷ In this, the NHK’s second morning wide show took an audience-participation methodology by inviting around twenty housewives every broadcast to discuss daily topics. This show’s focus on home and housewife represented all morning wide shows’ common goal: attracting housewives to the television. While husbands and children who had not yet left for school or work were also considered a target audience, all the morning wide shows primarily pitched to housewives who occupied the main portion of TV viewers during the morning time.

With the five morning wide shows in full swing, the morning show market was practically exhausted and broadcasters turned to afternoon and late night times. NET, encouraged by the success of *Kijima shō*, was thinking of another wide show in the afternoon time frame. In April 1965, *Tadaima shōgo afutanūn shō* (It’s Noon: Afternoon Show, hereafter *Afutanūn shō*) went on the air at noon, Monday to Friday, for fifty-five minutes.²⁸ To set itself apart from its morning-time counterpart, this show focused on entertainment segments and special features rather than the day’s news and stories.²⁹ At the beginning, this show experimented with “hosting by committee,” with a seven-member hosting group who were expected to work as news reporters, but this group hosting system turned out to be inefficient. After undergoing several changes of

²⁶ Etō, “Nyusushō no kōsatsu,” 79.

²⁷ “Sutajio de mita shūfuzō: NHK konnichiwa okusan no butaiura,” *Asahi shinbun*, March 10, 1968, 11.

²⁸ Asada, *Nyūsu shō ni kakeru*, 219.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 241-243.

hosts, this show finally settled down and started to gain consistent ratings with Katsura Kokinji as a new sole host.³⁰ Once this afternoon wide show proved to be successful, other players also set foot in the afternoon time slots which quickly became a fiercely contested territory among broadcasters: NHK's *Hiru no purezento* (Present in the Afternoon), NTV's *Aoshima yukio no waido shō* (Aoshima Yukio's Wide Show), Fuji TV's *Ohiru no goruden shō* (Golden Show in the Afternoon) and *Sanji no anata* (You at Three O'clock), TBS's *Sanji ni aimashō* (Let's Meet at Three).³¹

The wide show fever also spread to late night programs. NTV, another giant commercial broadcaster, bid its time rather than cranking things out hastily. When the conditions were ripe, it avoided stepping into the already competitive morning and afternoon time areas, and shrewdly opened its own territory in the children's wide show and, more importantly, night time wide show.³² In November 1965, Japan's first night time wide show *IIPM* was launched and quickly became the king of Japan's late night television. *IIPM* was produced and broadcast jointly by NTV in Tokyo and Yomiuri Telecasting Communication (YTV) in Osaka,³³ and identified itself as a "wide show for adults." The show's time slot, 11:00 pm to midnight, certainly affected its target audience. With the adult audience in mind, the Tokyo version of *IIPM* began with the standard wide show format which consisted of newscast, weather forecast, useful information and various entertainment segments with a hint of eroticism.³⁴ When it started, however, it turned out the night time audience loved the "pink-mood" features in the program. Therefore the

³⁰ Nakamura Sōichi et al., "Jōho dentatsu no pāsonarizēshon: moningu shō kara 11PM e," *YTV Report* 66 (1969): 87.

³¹ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *Broadcasting in Japan: the Twentieth Century Journey from Radio to Multimedia* (Tokyo: NHK, 2002), 193-195; "Hiru no baraeti shō," *Hōsō asahi* 201 (1971): 113-114.

³² Nakamura et al., "Jōho dentatsu no pāsonarizēshon," 89.

³³ NTV broadcast it on Monday, Wednesday and Friday while YTV was in charge of Tuesday and Thursday.

³⁴ Shiga Nobuo, *Terebi bangumi kotohajime: sōseiki no terebi bangumi 25-nenshi* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2008), 365.

show reorganized its segments to focus on the “eroticism” (*oiroke*) that could attract more night time viewers. In particular, the show became well-known for its female assistants called “cover girls” who dressed with tight fishnet stockings and posed in front of cameras during the show. Their “bed-time stretching” was also one of the signature segments of *IIPM* that offered the pleasure of a semi-strip show. Based on the “pink-mood,” *IIPM* was supported by three pillars: discussion on world topics, leisure and sex.³⁵ While the “sex talk” was a signature segment of the Osaka version, “leisure talk” became the center of the Tokyo version when Ōhashi Kyosen, a scriptwriter, was appointed as the host.³⁶ Once he became the host position, he quickly established himself as a master of leisure talk with his proficiency in such men’s leisure activities as mah-jongg, fishing, golf, night life and horse racing.³⁷ Although *IIPM* focused on male adults’ recreation, it also included a segment called *Kyosen kangaeru* (Kyosen’s Thought) where discussions on serious social issues such as Japan-Korea relations, Okinawa issues, constitution and national defense took place.³⁸ Indeed, the show featured a wide spectrum of issues as promised in its motto, “from politics to strips.”³⁹

Due to its erotic contents, *IIPM* was regularly brought up by TV critics as one of “vulgar” TV programs. Especially when other major commercial stations came up with their own night time wide shows following *IIPM*’s success—Fuji TV’s *Terebi naitoshō* (Television Night Show), NET’s *Nijū sanji show* (23 o’clock Show), TBS’s *Ginza naito naito* (Ginza Night Night)—the

³⁵ Nakamura et al., *Terebi bangumiron*, 201-203.

³⁶ Yomiuri Shinbunsha Geinōbu, *Terebi bangumi no 40-nen* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1994), 619. Ōhashi Kyosen started as a host for Friday only, but when Kojima Masao suddenly died in 1968, Ōhashi took over the Monday duty, becoming the face of the show. See “Gambare nyūsushō,” *Asahi shinbun* (January 25, 1968); Shiga, *Terebi bangumi kotohajime*, 367.

³⁷ Yomiuri Shinbunsha Geinōbu, *Terebi bangumi no 40-nen*, 618.

³⁸ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 573.

³⁹ Yomiuri Shinbunsha Geinōbu, *Terebi bangumi no 40-nen*, 618; Shiga, *Terebi bangumi kotohajime*, 370.

“competition of eroticism” escalated.⁴⁰ Against this backdrop, the discourse on “vulgarity” of *IIPM* was culminated in the incident where a stripper Ichijō Sayuri, who appeared at YTV’s *IIPM*, was arrested by police in May 1972 when she was performing at a strip bar. The police said that the arrest of Ichijō Sayuri was intended to send a warning to the broadcasting station where she performed an erotic dance. This warning was also accompanied by a message that the police would intervene in TV programs that were steeped in the “pink-line” under Criminal Law Article 175 that regulated obscenity. Broadcasters protested to the police’s drastic measure, arguing that it was an infringement of their right to free expression.⁴¹ NTV also defended its popular night time wide show against such accusations. According to Tsuzuku Tadahiko, one of the directors of the show, *IIPM*’s eroticism represented a challenge to Japanese people’s hesitance to show their true feelings and desires (*tatema-shugi*).⁴² Also, it was argued that the show looked at sex not as a tabooed pleasure or a set of scientific knowledge but as a part of human philosophy.⁴³ The “pink mood” of the show was welcomed by other TV critics. When Broadcasting Program Improvement Committee (*Hōsō Bangumi Kōjō Inikai*, BPIC) conducted a survey on “vulgar” programs in December 1969, the committee members agreed that *IIPM*’s contents in question were “not that vulgar” and some of the erotic elements even deserved to be welcomed by TV audiences. They further argued that not all eroticism was vulgar, and that of *IIPM* stayed true to TV’s role in entertaining viewers.⁴⁴ From the perspective of ratings as well, the program was well received. In Kansai area, where 75.5% of the population went to sleep by 11pm according to the NHK National Time Use survey conducted in 1965, the show garnered

⁴⁰ “Yoru no pinku gassen,” *Asahi shinbun*, December 7, 1973, 20.

⁴¹ “Bangumi kisei nara mondai: ōnishi nobuyoshi yomiuri terebi seisaku daiichi kachō no hanashi,” *Asahi shinbun*, May 8, 1972, 9.

⁴² Yomiuri Shinbunsha Geinōbu, *Terebi bangumi no 40-nen*, 618.

⁴³ Tsuganezawa Toshihiro et al., “Shinyazoku wo dokuten suru 11PM,” *YTV Report* 49 (1967): 29.

⁴⁴ Nihon Hōsō Rengōkai ed., *Yori yoi hōsō no tame ni 70*, 109-110.

nearly 10% of ratings over the summer of 1966, and finally surpassed 10% in 1967. Indeed, it opened up a new territory of late night television.⁴⁵

Overall, by the end of 1966, less than three years after *Kijima shō* was launched, there were fourteen wide shows in Japanese television with similar format but different contents, time slots, and target audiences.⁴⁶ The mid-1960s was indeed an era of wide shows. The booming of wide shows inevitably spawned competitions among the programs that shared the same time slots. Moreover, since most of the shows included newscasts, be it on-the-scene coverage or interviews with persons of interest, large national news events were heated battlefields among those wide shows. In October 1965, when the Japanese Socialist Party invited cosmonauts Valentina Tereshkova and her husband Andriyan Nikolayev from Soviet Union, Japanese TV stations fought each other over inviting them into their studios. As a result, the guests' TV schedule had been filled one month before they left for Japan. During their stay in Japan, the wife and husband cosmonauts were invited to two morning wide shows, *Kijima shō* and *Ogawa shō*, causing the criticism of excessive competition in coverage and waste of public airwaves.⁴⁷

Such fierce competition also reflected the popularity of wide shows which pioneered non-prime time TV programming, generated new audiences and developed new program formats. Therefore, it is worth exploring the question of why this hybrid genre became so dominant in Japanese television of the mid-1960s'. What elements in these shows contributed to such popularity? What kind of innovation did wide shows bring into TV broadcasting? By examining the importance of wide shows in the history of Japanese TV broadcasting, I seek to explore the shifting relation between television as a media and Japanese society in the 1960s.

⁴⁵ Tsuganezawa et al., "Shinyazoku wo dokuten suru 11PM," 24-25.

⁴⁶ Shiga, *Terebi bangumi kotohajime*, 367.

⁴⁷ "Katō na shuzai kyōsō," 20.

Wide Shows and the New Potential in Communication

It is very difficult to define what a “wide show” is. Wide shows were loosely categorized by the mixing of content that included live newscast, interviews and various entertainment segments.⁴⁸ In the early years of wide shows, this genre was primarily called “news shows” because TV stations and commentators emphasize these shows’ strong ties with newscast. Especially Japan’s first wide show *Kijima shō* was built around a desire to deliver news differently from conventional newscast. Until this show started, the news had been broadcast on television in filmed forms. After videotape was introduced in Japanese TV broadcasting in 1958, filmed programs quickly replaced live broadcasts, particularly in newscasts.⁴⁹ This way of delivering news on television was criticized for failing to capture the simultaneity of news. Critics argued that raw news materials became past affairs, “dead,” after being videotaped and edited.⁵⁰ When the wide show format was introduced, many media specialists and broadcasters who pursued an alternative mode of newscast found in it a new potential of delivering live news to the TV viewers. By extension, they were hopeful that the new style of newscast would bring forth a new way of communication with the audience, thus innovating television as a mass media to strengthen democracy. Among the idealists who held such hopes was Asada Takahiko, the producer of *Kijima shō*.

Asada had a conviction that his wide show would bring the pleasure of simultaneity (*dōjisei*) to viewers. The simultaneity in wide shows was, according to Asada, a bond between media and

⁴⁸ Arase Yutaka, “Nyūsushō no honshitsu,” *Gekkan nihon terebi* 82 (1966): 12.

⁴⁹ Takahashi, “Nyūsushō gonenshi,” 17; Asada, *Nyūsu shō ni kakeru*, 39-40.

⁵⁰ Asada, *Nyūsu shō ni kakeru*, 40.

its audience surrounding the moment of “now.”⁵¹ In other words, he believed that it was newscasters’ responsibility to enable audience to watch news as it was unfolding at the very moment, and only live newscast could deliver the true simultaneity of news to the audiences.⁵²

The pursuit of simultaneous temporality in wide shows also gave TV viewers a sense of spatial immediacy (*rinjōsei*) to what was happening in reality. Live newscasts in wide shows were usually accompanied by on-the-scene reports which brought on-going events into the living room as they unfolded.⁵³ Therefore broadcasters expected that through the simultaneity and immediacy the wide shows provided, TV audiences would be able to feel proximity to the event that they witnessed.

The hope for simultaneity and immediacy in the wide show news was ultimately connected to the issue of authenticity in audience’s media experience. As media scholar Arase Yutaka suggests, wide shows offered fans the promise of an unmediated viewing experience where, unlike newspapers and taped news segments that had been filtered through the eyes of reporters and editors, TV cameras captured raw and “authentic” images of on-going events. Therefore, according to him, it was not journalists but the TV audience itself who “eye-witnessed” and interpreted news events first hand.⁵⁴

Arase also contends that the simultaneity of the wide show does not necessarily mean capturing the exact time and space that a news event takes place. It is impossible for TV cameras to follow all the newsworthy events in Japan in real time. Rather, wide shows’ news coverage is expected to grasp the core of human relationships revealed in time and space. Because wide

⁵¹ Ibid., 40.

⁵² Etō Fumio, “Waidoshō no hōhō,” *Gekkan nihon terebi* 82 (1966): 21; Nagano Shigeichi et al., “Bangumi kenkyū: nyūsushō wo saguru,” *Chōsa jōho* 76 (1965): 49.

⁵³ Suzuki Hitoshi, “Jānarizumu toshite no nyūsushō,” *Gekkan nihon terebi* 82 (1966): 17.

⁵⁴ Arase, “Nyūsushō no honshitsu,” 12-13.

shows were live broadcasts in principle, they could not cover the news events that did not occur in the duration of the shows. In that case, wide shows usually took an approach of interviews with eye-witnesses or people who were directly involved in the real events to amplify the authenticity of the news.⁵⁵ For example, the first installment of *Stajio 102* featured an in-studio interview with survivors of a marine accident. The show could not cover the actual accident but it created a sense of immediacy to the accident by demonstrating how they were able to survive on the lifeboat that they actually used.⁵⁶ On the other hand, real-time on-the-scene coverage did not always result in an authentic experience. Live coverage of a new year's first sunrise at the top of Mt. Fuji, for example, could not offer meaningful experience that the audience wanted to be a part of.⁵⁷ Nonetheless,

The simultaneity and immediacy of wide shows' newscasts was celebrated not because it was a better newscast but because it allowed viewers to get closer to the "truth." From this perspective, Ono Hikaru, an executive member of *Ogawa shō* production team, expanded the concept of "simultaneity" further to include on-going social issues that audiences were interested in talking about at the moment of the broadcast.⁵⁸ Arase also concludes that a wide show is an ultimate form of journalism because it gets as close to the essence of the news events as it possibly can.⁵⁹

The creation of this sense of authenticity in the TV viewing experience also involved the show's production policies. Asada proudly stated that his show was built upon the principle of a

⁵⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁶ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 571.

⁵⁷ Nagano et al., "Nyūsushō wo saguru," 49.

⁵⁸ Sotozaki et al., "Atarashii nyūsu keishiki wo tsukuru," 31.

⁵⁹ Arase, "Nyūsushō no honshitsu," 15.

live show, from top to bottom.⁶⁰ There was no script to be followed. Instead, a “flow chart” (*shinkōhyō*) provided a guideline for each sequence for the hosts, who would basically speak spontaneously through the show.⁶¹ One of the policies of the show’s live studio broadcast was not to filter anything once captured by camera. For example, until then, it was considered a taboo to expose broadcasting staff and equipment to the camera. Asada, however, believed that his show must televise truly live images, and thus allowed his cameras to show any parts of the studio as necessary. He did not care if his show hosts made mistakes. His belief was that it was only natural to transmit to the viewers’ home everything that happened in his studio. He also allowed his staff to freely react to the show while in progress, by laughing, clapping and shedding tears.⁶² All of these measures centered around avoiding artificiality and creating a humane and authentic show.

Along with simultaneity and immediacy, critics also associated wide shows with the audiences’ everyday life. A media study group, having researched six wide shows in four channels, observed that wide shows were closely connected to the everydayness of Japan. The morning and afternoon wide shows were produced to address life issues of housewives while the nighttime counterparts discussed topics of male adults. However, the study suggested that the everydayness of wide shows did not just point to the content. These shows also sought to ensure that viewers felt comfortable watching the shows. To this end, the study pointed out, the show hosts were carefully selected. The wide show hosts were expected to be skilled MCs who could commit themselves to the show five or six days a week, and knew how to handle live broadcasts in which virtually anything could happen. While skillfully managing scheduled segments such as

⁶⁰ Asada, *Nyūsu shō ni kakeru*, 40.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 149-151; Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 570.

⁶² Asada, *Nyūsu shō ni kakeru*, 41-43, 120-121.

news, talks, interviews, entertainment and in-program advertisements within the limited timeframe, they had to be flexible with breaking news and the sorts of surprises inherent in live television. Therefore, a certain amount of improvisation was always in their ammunition.⁶³ In order to secure the best show hosts possible, producers relied on NHK announcers, many of whom were well-trained in popular NHK entertainment shows such as *Jesuchā* (Gesture) and *Sore wa watashidesu* (That's Me), and thus brought some star power with them. Kijima Norio was one such host. Before taking *Kijima shō*, he was a renowned NHK announcer in *Seikatsu no chie* (Wisdom of Life) and *Chanoma no kagaku* (Science in the Living Room). Asada respected his diligence and common touch. Thus, when Kijima was promoted to an executive position off broadcasting in NHK, Asada lured him out of NHK to take up the NET morning show. For his part, Kijima liked Asada's show project, noting that he also had a desire to do this type of show even before Asada's offer; such a show could not happen at NHK.

Kijima was joined by two co-hosts—Inoue Kazuko, a former RKB Mainichi announcer and Kurihara Reiji, another former NHK announcer. Representing the middle-aged, housewives and younger generation each, Kijima, Inoue and Kurihara were credited as generating a family-like atmosphere that could make the audience comfortable as if they were watching their own everyday conversation.⁶⁴ In particular, the show's signature news segment, *Kesa no wadai* (This Morning's Topic), enjoyed popularity for the trio's skillful handling of news topics in their family-like conversation. The studio where the relaxed conversation transpired was considered another "living room" that was connected to its real audience's living rooms, on an equal footing as opposed to regular news programs that "announced" news to the audience. The study group on

⁶³ Nagano et al., "Nyūsushō wo saguru," 46.

⁶⁴ Etō, "Nyūsushō no kōsatsu," 76; Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 570; Nagano et al., "Nyūsushō wo saguru," 49.

the wide shows argued that such an equal communication was possible because the hosting trio acted not as broadcasters or analysts but as ordinary TV viewers who, as “people in everyday life” (*seikatsusha*), would discuss daily news in the context of their own lives.⁶⁵

The wide show hosts were also encouraged to provide commentary based on their own subjective opinions on the news topics. Until then, newscast had usually been done by impersonal news anchors who recited their news scripts and never put their personal thoughts in the news. While the objectivity of news coverage was upheld in principle, the new style of newscast gave ample time for “discussion” of the daily news, drawing on the hosts’ own world view. In this way, wide shows were considered innovated newscasts that not only announced news to the audience but also invited the viewer into a conversation that addressed the audience’s life issues.⁶⁶ The critics in the wide show study group suggested that while a wide show studio could be another living room, this living room should be an “advanced base” (*zenshin kichi*) open to a larger society, through a pipeline of on-the-scene coverage and interviews with people of interest.⁶⁷

In this, the wide show hosts were expected to appeal to the audience by fully revealing their own strong individuality. Critics argued that, by showing their characteristics, wide show hosts were conceived as people who were living an actual life, able to talk freely to the audience. Indeed, TV fans were attracted to wide show hosts with strong and folksy personalities. Kijima was often called “*naki no Kijima*” (Kijima, the weeper) because fans responded favorably when he sympathized with his guests and shed tears over their sad stories. In the meantime, the host of *Afutanūn shō* Katsura Kokinji was known for his defiant attitude toward “social injustices”

⁶⁵ Nagano et al., “Nyūsushō wo saguru,” 55.

⁶⁶ Suzuki, “Jānarizumu toshite no nyūsushō,” 16.

⁶⁷ Nagano et al., “Nyūsushō wo saguru,” 49.

because he often displayed his anger when discussing social evils. This image of a “guardian of justice” gave him a large following of fans and the nickname, “*ikari no Kokinji*” (furious Kokinji). In the nighttime arena, the popularity of *IIPM* was driven by the Tokyo edition’s host Ōhashi Kyosen’s cheerful talk about men’s entertainment and the Osaka edition’s Fujimoto Giichi and Andō Takako, a pair who had a knack for smooth talk with an Osaka accent.⁶⁸

Therefore the hosts’ personal opinions, emotions and characteristics were central to the discussion of the wide shows’ mode of communication, intended to win the audience’s sympathy and, by extension, create a community that encompassed audience, broadcasters and those featured in the news events.

In a sense, wide shows’ emphasis on the personalities of the hosts can be also interpreted as another effort to increase the authenticity of the viewing experience of the audience. Critics in the wide show study group believed that the TV audience desired to watch genuine and undisguised action on television, and wide shows could satisfy those audiences by showing candid images of hosts and guests. For example, they pointed out that Kijima, who was known for his relaxed attitude on the show, looked unusually uptight and nervous when he was having difficulty connecting to a reporter at Sasebo port, where a large anti-nuclear protest was taking place against a nuclear-powered U.S. submarine at anchor. However, they argued, his anxiousness aptly relayed the sense of urgency and tension of the protest to the audience, rather than making them uncomfortable.⁶⁹

In total, the philosophies of the wide shows—simultaneity, immediacy, everydayness, and intriguing but relatable hosts—converged to one principle of the wide shows: authenticity in the

⁶⁸ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 571-573.

⁶⁹ Nagano et al., “Nyūsushō wo saguru,” 49.

TV viewing experience. TV critics and wide show producers hoped that the authentic viewing experience would be achieved by a communication loop between broadcasters and audience.⁷⁰ In this loop, broadcasters would be presented as a part of their own audience. As such, there would be zero distance between the two parties, and they would communicate with each other on an equal footing since they both would stand on the basis of their own everyday lives.⁷¹ In this ideal of the TV communication, the real-time news coverage and well-timed interviews and talks were handled by a hosting team in quasi-family atmosphere. Wide shows, through intimate dialogs among the hosts, sought to digest and deliver the news to the viewers in a way that revealed their subjective opinions, personalities, emotions and life experience. When this communication loop was successfully established, news would stop being a unilateral message transmission and, while still offering a reliable source of information, would be inviting and unpretentious toward the audience. This kind of news program that was firmly embedded in the people's everyday life was thought to be an integral part of broadcasters' democratic relationship with their audiences. The wide show study group contrasted this communication loop model with "edifying" (*kyokateki*) communication in which messages were to be transmitted in a top-down fashion. They suggested that the best example of such a one-way communication was Japan's wartime newscasts.⁷²

Wide shows were not just considered another format of TV program. Many media commentators and TV producers dreamed of a new mode of communication based on the example of the wide shows, facilitating two-way conversations between the staff responsible for making programs and the audience that viewed them. Furthermore, some of them believed that

⁷⁰ Etō, "Nyūsushō no kōsatsu," 76.

⁷¹ Nagano et al., "Nyūsushō wo saguru," 57.

⁷² Ibid., 55.

not just wide shows but television itself should be the forefront of this open communication. Indeed, wide shows represented an effort to create a program format that was inherent to television as a mass media form.

Critics saw wide shows as a miniature of TV broadcasting. Each part of wide shows—news, talks and interviews, entertainment and advertisements—represented major TV program genres. From this perspective, Sotozaki Hiroshi, an executive member of NET’s morning show production team called television a “twenty-four-hour wide show.”⁷³ Others argued that such variety of wide show contents spoke to the television as a media which was full of diverse components. The term “wide show” itself indicated that the program contained a wide range of contents and genres. However, this is not to say that wide shows were a simple sum of those elements. Arase argued that the parts of wide shows—news, drama, singing, talks and advertisements—were all melted into a completely different genre that could challenge existing conventions and boundaries of each component part. He called this process in wide shows a “televisual synthesis” (*terebiteki na sōgō*).⁷⁴ This synthesis was exemplified by a song presented at *Kijima shō* in April 1965. “*Yoitomake no uta*” (song of ramming earth) was sung by a chanson singer Maruyama Akihiro whose earnest thoughts about her mother and childhood imparted a touching moment to the audience. Critics celebrated the song as a genre-defying event that demonstrated the singer’s life story and Japanese society after the war.⁷⁵ Another media critic Etō Fumio maintained that this song was an extraordinary mixture of entertainment and “information,” which epitomized the synthesizing power of wide shows and, by extension,

⁷³ Sotozaki et al., “Atarashii nyūsu keishiki wo tsukuru,” 29.

⁷⁴ Arase, “Nyūsushō no honshitsu,” 12, 17-19; Tamura Minoru and Fujihira Yoshinori, “Nyūsushō to shichōsha no shinwa kankei,” *Hōsō bunka* 24:3 (1969): 16; Sotozaki et al., “Atarashii nyūsu keishiki wo tsukuru,” 29.

⁷⁵ Nagano et al., “Nyūsushō wo saguru,” 45-46.

television as a media.⁷⁶

Others echoed this sentiment, pinpointing found wide shows as a genre uniquely capable of unlocking the full potential of television.⁷⁷ Japanese television grew up nourished by other established media. News reports had been conducted by newspaper since the Meiji period. Serial dramas came from cinema and theaters. Storytelling genres—Japan’s traditional entertainment—had been well established at *yose* theaters. Sports broadcasting was based on real sports events that had nothing to do with television in itself. Music fans could get access to their favorite music through records without television. All other TV program formats except wide shows were derived from, and thus replaceable by other media forms. As such, wide show was TV’s first original program format that made use of the live-relay nature of television. Media critics pointed out that television was a media of live broadcast that other media could not imitate, and indeed Japanese television for the first few years only delivered live pictures, until videotape was introduced in 1958. Live on-the-scene broadcast played an important role in establishing television as a national media. Especially with the imperial wedding in 1959 and the Anti-Security Treaty protest in 1960, TV’s live broadcast on the street attracted large audience.⁷⁸ Therefore, wide shows were regarded as both a brilliant innovation and a return to TV’s inherent nature of broadcasting live images.⁷⁹

TV’s power in live broadcast, epitomized in the vogue of wide shows, and the potential of a “communication loop” were discussed in regard to other media forms as well. Especially the everydayness of wide shows and, by extension, television per se invoked many commentators to draw parallels between the new program format and Japan’s postwar magazine culture. They

⁷⁶ Etō, “Nyūsushō no kōsatsu,” 76.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 75.

⁷⁸ Nagano et al., “Nyūsushō wo saguru,” 48.

⁷⁹ Tamura and Fujihira, “Nyūsushō to shichōsha no shinwa kankei,” 16.

pointed out that wide shows shared many commonalities with popular magazines in how they communicate with their audience. It is useful, then, to place wide shows in the context of postwar Japan's everyday media culture, in which popular magazines played a significant role.

Television in Weekly Magazine Culture

While television came into being and became firmly embedded in Japanese everyday life, weekly magazines also grabbed the attention of people from all walks of life. The history of weekly magazines in Japan goes back to 1922 when *Asahi Newspaper* launched biweekly *Junkan asahi* which would soon turn into weekly *Shūkan asahi*. The first weekly magazine of Japan contained news, business columns, essays, fictions and other entertainment sections. One month later, a rival, *Mainichi Newspaper* also launched its own weekly *Sunday mainichi*. The two weeklies quickly captured Japanese readers' hearts, each of their circulations reaching 200,000 around 1923.⁸⁰ Attentive to critics and commentary on current topics, these weeklies functioned as an extension of the daily newspapers.⁸¹

The influence of weekly magazines was greatly enhanced after the war. With rapid urbanization, the size of the magazine market was spectacularly enlarged. In addition to the two pioneers, two other newspapers, *Sankei Newspaper* and *Yomiuri Newspaper* joined the weekly magazine competition, each of them publishing *Shūkan sankei* and *Shūkan yomiuri* in 1952. The four newspaper-originated weekly magazines fared very well in the 1950s, reaching 10,000,000

⁸⁰ "Weekly magazines: keys to an information society" *Japan Update* 7 (1988): 9. But the circulation of *Shūkan asahi* dropped to around 100,000 by the end of the war due to the government's paper rationing. Yoshida Noriaki and Okada Akiko ed., *Zasshi media no bunkashi: henbōsuru sengo paradaimu* (Tokyo: Shinwasha, 2012), 78.

⁸¹ "Weekly magazines", 9; Yoshida and Okada ed., *Zasshi media no bunkashi*, 136; Yano Hidekazu, "Taishū bunka to shūkanshi no mondai (gendai no shikaku bunka)," *Gekkan shakaitō* 179 (1971): 172.

copies in combined monthly circulation by 1955.⁸² However, the boom of postwar weekly magazines was fed by some unexpected sources. After the four newspaper companies proved that a weekly magazine was profitable, publishing companies also jumped into the game. Shinchosha Publishing Co, Ltd., a publishing company specialized in literary publication, entered the arena in 1956 with *Shūkan shinchō*, focusing on literature and current social topics. Without established news networks, the attempts by the new weeklies proved to be a resounding success, obtaining 800,000 in weekly circulation only three years from its inception. While the four newspaper-associated weeklies were tapping the parent companies' well-established news network, *Shūkan shinchō* utilized freelancers for news and current issues coverage.⁸³ From the beginning, its target readers were white-collar workers in the business sector, in contrast to the other four weeklies that were supported by housewives. Following *Shūkan shinchō*'s success, publishing companies rushed to the weekly business, marking the late 1950s and the early 1960s as the age of weekly magazines. By 1959, the total circulation of weeklies in Japan surpassed that of monthlies. In 1960, there were twenty-six weeklies in total, which would increase up to forty-five by 1969.⁸⁴

Behind the success of weeklies was the economic recovery of Japanese society. The first two weeklies in Japan—*Shūkan asahi* and *Sunday mainichi*—represented the rise of mass consumer society in 1920s. The growth of middle class society in urban areas manifested in many areas, including a growing magazine readership. Other than the two weeklies, a popular monthly *Bungei shunjū* was well received by the newly emerged salaried workers while mass

⁸² Yoshida and Okada ed., *Zasshi media no bunkashi*, 136-137.

⁸³ Ibid., 141.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 139-147.

women's magazines like *Shūfu no tomo* appealed to urban female readers.⁸⁵ *Kingu* attracted large numbers of readers from men and women of all ages.⁸⁶ The postwar boom of weeklies followed a similar pattern. Japan's high growth rates resulted in the advent of mass consumer society on an unprecedented scale, while an explosive increase of urban population ensued. Male salaried workers were the driving force behind the proliferation of weeklies. They believed that they could obtain useful information from them, the kind of information that would lead them to success in their workplace.⁸⁷ Thus typically they would purchase their favorite weeklies along with daily newspapers at a newsstand on a train station, and read them during the commute.⁸⁸ Weeklies from publishing companies such as *Shūkan shinchō* and *Shūkan gendai* catered to this predominately male readership.⁸⁹ In the meantime, some weeklies sought to appeal mainly to female readers. The imperial wedding and the "Mitch-boom" in 1959 was the catalyst of the spread of women's weeklies. *Josei jishin*, in particular, grew up with this celebration atmosphere, and expanded its readership by depicting the new imperial princess as a "star."⁹⁰ Four big women's weeklies—*Josei jishin*, *Shūkan josei*, *Josei seven* and *Shūkan young lady*—were launched between 1958 and 1963 to be mainly read by "B·G" or "business girls," that is, young female office workers whose positions had been generated by the high economic growth.⁹¹ Meanwhile, some weeklies catered to the urban young generation. Baby boomers became young adults in the late 1960s, and they were entranced by weekly magazines like *Heibon punch* that

⁸⁵ For an in-depth analysis on prewar women's magazines, See Barbara Sato, *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

⁸⁶ Yoshida and Okada ed., *Zasshi media no bunkashi*, 132-134.

⁸⁷ "Weekly magazines," 10; Yoshida and Okada ed., *Zasshi media no bunkashi*, 151.

⁸⁸ "Weekly magazines," 8-9.

⁸⁹ Yoshida and Okada ed., *Zasshi media no bunkashi*, 153.

⁹⁰ Ueno Kōshi, *Nikutai no jidai: taikenteki 60-nendai bunkaron* (Tokyo: Gendai Shokan, 1989), 185-192; Sakamoto Kazue, "Josei zasshi no rekishi bunseki," *Ochanomizu joshi daigaku jinbun kagaku kiyō* 53 (2000): 257.

⁹¹ Yoshida and Okada ed., *Zasshi media no bunkashi*, 24. The "business girls" would later be called "office ladies" or "OL." It is important to note that these "interpellations" were done by none other than *Josei jishin*. Ueno, *Nikutai no jidai*, 208.

featured life styles of the postwar version of urban “modern boys.”⁹²

Television was one of the reasons why weeklies became so popular in postwar Japan. Because television started to regulate viewers’ lives on a weekly basis, traditional monthly magazines could not catch up to the speed that readers desired.⁹³ In addition, television worked as a good source of weeklies’ articles by creating a world of celebrity (*geinōkai*) that women’s weeklies specialized in.⁹⁴ However, this is not to say that TV’s influence to the weekly magazine culture was unilateral. Several media critics paid attention to the way in which television and weekly magazines benefitted mutually and shared many features in common. They raised as an example of such exchanges another popular postwar weekly *Shūkan heibon* published by Heibon Shuppan Inc. In the early occupation period, Japanese people were starved of reading magazines because of the dearth of paper supply to publishers during and right after the war. From this vacuum sprang up many new magazine houses, including Heibon Shuppan Inc.⁹⁵ The first work of this magazine venture was a monthly *Heibon* that began as a literary magazine in 1945.⁹⁶ After it was transformed in 1948 to an entertainment magazine, focusing on movies and popular songs, its readership exploded, reaching a million in 1953.⁹⁷ The innovation of *Heibon* was its emphasis on high visuality in their pages. The famous *gurabia* (glossies) pages delivered striking

⁹² Yoshida and Okada ed., *Zasshi media no bunkashi*, 25-26.

⁹³ Ōya Sōichi, “Gunzō dansai dai-5-kai,” *Shūkan asahi*, January 11, 1959. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 88.

⁹⁴ Kataoka Masami, “Shūkanshi so no kyōsōishiki no uchi to soto-2-josei shūkanshi no hanayaka na kyōsō,” *Sōgō jānarizumu kenkyū* 7:4 (1970): 80.

⁹⁵ It was originally launched as Bonjinsha (Commoners’ Company) and changed the company’s name to Heibon Shuppan in 1954. Sakamoto Hiroshi, “*Heibon*” *no jidai: 1950-nendai no taishū goraku zasshi to wakamonotachi* (Kyoto: Shōwadō, 2008), 3.

⁹⁶ Monthly *Heibon* was originally published in November 1928 by Shimonaka Yasaburō who intended to produce a magazine that would surpass the popularity of *Kingu*. This project eventually failed, and Iwahori Yoshinosuke, one of the five founders of Bonjinsha/Heibon Shuppan Inc., made an agreement with Shimonaka to take over the title *Heibon*, and launched their new monthly under that title. He chose that title because it sounded “humanistic” and was “the best one for a magazine that allows people who deny war and pursue peace to ensure their aliveness.” *Ibid.*, 51.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

everyday images of movie stars and popular singers.⁹⁸ Along with the *gurabia* pages, *Heibon* sought to bridge the gap between celebrities and their fans by holding special events like popularity votes, stars' lookalike competitions, Miss and Mr. Heibon competition, field trips to filming sites, and so on.⁹⁹ These participatory events were very effective in expanding the magazine's readership base. Magazine fan clubs were created across the country, and their autonomous activities were linked to the magazine's fan-based events. One of the special features based on such active fans' input was the "*Kibō taidan*" (Conversation by Popular Request) in which two stars from different backgrounds were selected by readers' votes, and had a conversation with each other for an interview article. For example, the March 1948 issue contains a dialogue between a baseball player, Ōshita Hiroshi, and actress Takehisa Chieko. Critics paid attention to this rather unlikely encounter of stars from two different worlds, generating a fun conversation about life issues such as marriage and monthly salaries, which was seen as having a humanizing effect on the celebrities.¹⁰⁰

In 1959, amid the weekly magazine fever, Heibon Shuppan Inc. launched the weekly *Shūkan heibon*. While the monthly *Heibon* had concentrated on popular songs and movie stars, *Shūkan heibon* foregrounded the newly created entertainment world that had much to do with the rapid growth of TV broadcasting. Indeed, this new weekly sought to be "an entertainment magazine sitting by a TV set in the living room."¹⁰¹ In particular, critics observed that what this new popular entertainment weekly was interested in talking about were so-called "*tarento*," the multi-talented TV stars who represented the variety that television as a media offered to the

⁹⁸ For example, stars' home visit was one of the typical *gurabia* topics. Ibid., 80.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 118-119; Etō Fumio, *Miru zasshi suru zasshi: heibon bunka no hakkensei to sōzōsei* (Tokyo: Heibon Shuppan, 1966), 101.

¹⁰⁰ Etō, *Miru zasshi suru zasshi*, 100-102.

¹⁰¹ Sakamoto, "*Heibon*" no jidai, 149.

audience.¹⁰² This new breed of TV personalities had one thing in common; they were fans' favorites not for the mastery of any art, but for their appeal as human beings. They were intriguing figures that fans were able to relate to. Critics were especially excited to find that such a human appeal of *tarento* was well demonstrated by the weekly's covers. In the making of postwar Japanese magazines, cover design was vital as sales were made or lost at the visually cluttered newsstands on the street. The innovation of *Shūkan heibon*'s cover was inspired by what Shimizu Tatsuo, the Vice President of the Heibon Shuppan Inc., called "cross breeding," which was in vogue in fashion design at the time. Just as the monthly *Heibon* showed in "*Kibō taidan*" interactions between two distinct celebrities that invited readers into the two stars' everyday life, the new weekly's cover showed two unique TV personalities in the same frame, thus propelling readers to imagine the unlikely interaction between the two different worlds that each of them represented. The cover of *Shūkan heibon*'s first issue contained Takahashi Keizō, a former NHK announcer and one of the best MCs on television, and a famous actress Dan Reiko, both of them riding a sports car. This cover design distinguished itself from the old convention of facial close-ups that most of the magazines still used. The weekly would contain a conversation between the two cover models, which was an extension of the "cross-breeding" that set the tone of the entire issue. Etō, struck by the unorthodox cover design, argued that such a "cross-breeding" cover was exuding the sense of everyday life that the two stars from different worlds shared in common and had a potential to expand to the readers' world of life. Accordingly, it was as if readers were in conversation with the two stars in a virtual dialogue.¹⁰³

¹⁰² On definition of *tarento*, see Etō, *Miru zasshi suru zasshi*, 155. He puts *tarento* at the center of TV culture crossovers of different areas. Also, see articles in "Hōsō tarento kō," *Hōsō asahi* 64 (1959) and Etō Fumio, "Tarento," *Hōsō asahi* 209 (1971) for more details on the discussion of *tarento* in Japan.

¹⁰³ Etō Fumio, "Heibon bunka no tanjō," *Chōsa jōho* 82 (1966), 43; Etō Fumio, "Heibon bunka no mirai," *Chōsa Jōho* 85 (1966), 40.

Drawing explicit parallels with television, Etō also pointed out that the everydayness of the new style in weekly magazines was part and parcel of television's ability to capture the mundane. The proliferation of *tarento* was a televisual phenomenon as TV broadcasting tended to bring together a great many different stars. On television, encounters among different fields of life took place on a daily basis. Television was a big melting pot in which singers and comedians, actresses and baseball players comingled on variety and talk shows. As a result, all-around stars were born every day, and *Shūkan heibon* was one of the weeklies able to capture the sensibility of the TV culture where lively exchanges between different worlds were commonplace.¹⁰⁴ Just as “televisual synthesis” brought together several different elements and created something completely distinctive, *Shūkan heibon* invited people from diverse areas and made them face each other to create a unique atmosphere closely connected to audience's everyday lives.

Along with the “televisual synthesis” and the emergence of *tarento*, critics also paid attention to the weeklies' approach to everydayness with their various contents. Any given weekly aggregated a vast array of articles and images that spoke to different parts of people's lives. Critics observed that when put together, these articles created a harmony that uniquely engaged readers' everyday lives. For example, on June 29, 1960, *Josei jishin* presented on its first page a bright image of the new imperial family—Crown Princess Michiko along with her husband Crown Prince Akihito and her new born son Hironomiya—in a car. This rather typical women's weekly-type photo was followed by an image of Kanba Michiko, who was killed at the June 15 Anti-Security Treaty protest, and a feature article about her death. While this particular mixture of images and articles was seen inconsistent, the parallel of the two “Michikos” generated a unique reading of the moment in postwar history, putting readers in the middle of the

¹⁰⁴ Etō, “Heibon bunka no mirai,” 40.

historical transition.¹⁰⁵

Media critics noted other instances of this radical pell-mell style in the young generation's weekly *Heibon punch*. Started in 1964, this weekly was the first to target men exclusively as women had been the majority of magazine readers. Foregrounding young men's fashion and lifestyle with a clever use of striking nude pages, this first "male weekly" soon created a sensation, reaching a million readers in 1966 and opening up the age of life-style magazines.¹⁰⁶ *Heibon punch*'s main menu was men's leisure activities—horse racing, night life, bowling, mah-jongg, cars, fashion, sex, etc.—reflecting the money and leisure time that the rising baby boomer generation could access as a result of economic growth.¹⁰⁷ At the same time, Etō discusses how the weekly discussed youth cultures in other parts of the world. For example, the February 14, 1966 issue discussed three U.S. anti-Vietnam war folk singers—Pete Seeger, Joan Baez and Bob Dylan—and how they communicated with American youngsters through their music. Other issues also dealt with CBS's *Town Meeting of the World* where young people from five different places of the world—Paris, London, Belgrade, Washington D.C., Mexico City—had a long-distance, live-broadcast debate via satellite.¹⁰⁸ *Heibon punch*'s interests in international youth culture was vividly illustrated in its *gurabia* pages that featured images of youth participating in disputes of the world, such as South Korean protesters against the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea, and anti-government demonstration in Saigon,

¹⁰⁵ Ueno, *Nikutai no jidai*, 205.

¹⁰⁶ Yoshida and Okada ed., *Zasshi media no bunkashi*, 25-26; Ueno, *Nikutai no jidai*, 112, 212-216.

¹⁰⁷ The success of *Heibon punch* paved the way for the proliferation of "life-style magazines." It generated a fashion fever among men of the younger generation, resulting in the creation of *miyukizoku* and "Ivy-look." See Akagi Yōichi, *Heibon punch 1964* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2004), 111-113. Heibon Shuppan Inc. also issued a special edition of *Heibon punch* for female readers twice, which led to the start of *an'an*, Japan's first women's fashion magazine. See Kinameri Yoshihisa and Muro Kenji, "Hanayakani Kemutte, Mawari ni wa hoshi bakari datta: Shūkan Heibon, Heibon Panchi, soshite an an e," *Shisō no kagaku dai-7-ji* 135 (1990), 71.

¹⁰⁸ Etō, *Miru zasshi suru zasshi*, 61-64.

Vietnam.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, *Heibon punch*'s reading of the youth culture focused on a counter-cultural and international aspect.¹¹⁰ By projecting this perspective back to Japanese youth culture, *Heibon punch* sought to synthesize the young generation's life with a larger cultural horizon. An article in the October 28, 1968 issue attempted to map the landscape of Japan's counter-culture by introducing the top Japanese avant-garde and underground artists. This weekly viewed the Japanese counter-cultural scene as a key part of the young generation's cultural mores.¹¹¹

Critics pointed out that the methodology of "cross-breeding" among stars, and the synthesis of varied aspects of readers' everyday life was emblematic of the style of wide shows. They suggested wide shows were being produced with the same principle as weeklies: the hodgepodge of different segments that addressed audience's life issues. For example, *Kijima shō* was composed of segments such as *Kesa no wadai* (This Morning's Topic), *Toki no hito, wadai no hito* (Interview with People in the News), *Annai* (Notice), *Seikatsu, tenki yohō* (Life and Weather Forecast), *Akachan tanjōbi omedetou* (Congratulations on Babies' Birthday), *Kyō no shinkon* (Today's Newly Married), *Watashi no guchi* (My Complaint), *Watashi no keiken* (My Experience), *Kurashi* (Daily Life), *Konya no kondate no hinto* (Tips for Dinner Tonight) and *Purezento* (Gift for Viewers: indirect advertisement).¹¹² Watching this show, several media critics observed that this composition resembled that of weeklies particularly those marketed to women.¹¹³ In fact, the show's producer Asada had worked for editing women's magazines for ten years before he entered NET. He admitted that this experience had allowed him to understand

¹⁰⁹ Ueno, *Nikutai no jidai*, 223.

¹¹⁰ On the international dimensions of the counter-culture in Japan, see Steven C Ridgely, *Japanese Counterculture: The Antiestablishment Art of Terayama Shuji* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

¹¹¹ Ueno, *Nikutai no jidai*, 230-232.

¹¹² Nakamura et al., "Jōho dentatsu no pāsonarizēshon," 84.

¹¹³ Okamoto Hiroshi and Fukuda Sadayoshi, "'Kijima shō' no heibon na kanōsei," *CBC Report*, 8:9 (September 1964), 34.

“what women want.” When he was engaged in making the show, he was able to make full use of such experience.¹¹⁴ Before *Kijima shō*, he experimented with a program format that was inspired by the weekly magazine boom in the early 1960s; in 1961, he was involved in planning a program called *Terebi shūkanshi* (Television Weekly) which, exploiting the weekly boom in Japan, sought to bring the fun of reading weeklies into television. Putting together different segments in a forty-five minute show, he assessed that the show was a prototype wide show. Although this show lasted only for a year, he learned how to bring together different elements while capitalizing on the appeal of live broadcast.¹¹⁵ He argued that wide shows like *Kijima shō* stemmed from the mindset of magazines while other regular weekly programs relied on that of monographs. This was because wide shows, usually broadcast five to six days a week, were produced day-to-day with fixed or flexible segments that focused on “today” just as magazines were based upon current issues. In contrast, each installment of regular weekly programs was self-contained like a monograph.¹¹⁶

When considering its contents, a wide show brought together all kinds of people to its studio and had them share their life experience with the audience just as *Shūkan heibon* created a space for the encounter among stars from different backgrounds. During this process, many stars appealed to the fans with their personal attractiveness and in the process became *tarento*. However, it was not just different people that wide shows brought together. We have discussed that media critics focused on the way the variety of components of the shows contributed to the “televisual synthesis” in light of viewers’ life interests. They stressed that the news segments

¹¹⁴ Asada, *Nyūsu shō ni kakeru*, 311-314.

¹¹⁵ He realized that although this program was called a TV version of a weekly magazine, the once-a-week format did not work when it came to tackling current topics. Thus he turned to daily format when producing *Kijima shō*. See Asada, *Nyūsu shō ni kakeru*, 12.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 315.

were instantly related to other parts of the show. For example, the wide show study group discussed an installment of *Kijima shō* that presented an interview with a Japanese volunteer about the U.S. landing ship tanks that would head to Vietnam, and his mother who was crying with concerns about her son's safety. While the show was not hesitant to exploit the outburst of emotion between the mother and the son, the critics argued, it effectively demonstrated the fact that Japan was becoming an integral part of the war in Vietnam. The show also invited an actress Kishi Keiko who was living in France at the time, and asked her about how French people thought about the Vietnam War. Through interview segments, therefore, a news topic was viewed through the eyes of people to whom the audience could relate. They also pointed out that the principle of synthesizing different segments under one topic was "realism" (*jikkanshugi*) that touched on the audience's real lives. Such a "realistic" approach enabled the wide show audience to consider the Vietnam War not as a happening in a different country but as a world-wide issue that Japanese people were also involved in.¹¹⁷

Such a "realistic" approach to the audiences' life was also found in the adult wide show *IIPM*. From the beginning, this show's producer Ihara Takatada was happy to state that he would follow the line of *Heibon punch*, making it an adult men's entertainment wide show.¹¹⁸ As we saw above, the show's main offerings like "cover girls," leisure talks and sex talks were exactly in line with *Heibon punch*'s contents. On the other hand, world topics were also central to both *Heibon punch* and *IIPM*. When *Heibon punch* discussed international youth culture in conjunction with Japanese youngsters' life, *IIPM* also expanded its horizon to world-wide issues. As was discussed above, *IIPM*'s discussion on current issues like Japan-Korea relations and the

¹¹⁷ Nagano et al., "Nyūsushō wo saguru," 56.

¹¹⁸ Suzuki Hitoshi, "Nyūsushō", *Chōsa jōho* 84 (1966): 6; "'11PM' to 'ohayō! kodomoshō' seisaku tantōsha ni kiku," *Gekkan nihon terebi* 82 (1966): 33.

politics of Okinawa in *Kyosen kangaeru* segment established itself as a journalistic show.

Although this journalistic hue dissipated over time, the show continued to shed light on youth culture by inviting prominent Japanese subcultural figures—cartoonists, cameramen and illustrators. Its interest in youth culture was international in scope as it discussed American hippy culture and underground art, and made comparisons between counter-cultures in the U.S. and Japan.¹¹⁹

The media critics' discourse on the strong connection between weeklies and wide shows leads us to think about the way an ideal communication between media and audience was imagined. They found both of the popular media forms to be capable of reaching mass audience. At the same time, the potential of the wide shows and weeklies was considered to be deeply rooted in the audience's everyday lives. They argued that wide shows and weeklies were not just addressing concerns of their audience's everyday life, but also communicating with the audience on an equal footing. Wide show hosts discussed national news topics not from journalists' perspectives, but as another viewer. Weekly magazines also paid attention to daily topics and important figures from the perspective of human interests. What the critics saw in this communication loop between media and its audience was a unique synthesis whereby several different elements of the society were intermingled in such a way as to be conceived as a part of ordinary life.

In the meantime, the communication loop was not just limited to explaining Japanese popular media in 1960s. The metaphor of the close interaction and the two-way communication was a core concept of the Cold War U.S. society according to which cultural vanguards imagined

¹¹⁹ Shiga, *Terebi bangumi kotohajime*, 370; "Kizensa ga hoshii zen'eigeijutsuka," *Asahi shinbun*, January 28, 1970, 9. Weekly magazines' approach to the audience is also viewed as "realism." See Ueno, *Nikutai no jidai*, 192-193.

a different mode of communication against the merciless power of the state's conservative cultural policy. By bringing light to how the U.S. cultural landscape was in transition during the Cold War, I would like to understand Japanese discourse on the communication loop in popular media in a transnational context in which alternative cultural movements crossed borders and created an international momentum.

Feedback Loop in Cold War Culture

While Japanese media critics sought to promote two-way communication as a principle of mass media production, the U.S. society was also divided on how to deploy cultural powers among various social groups. Daniel Belgrad traces the history of the concept of the “feedback loop” that became one of important metaphors of democratic communication in Cold War America. He suggests that, as the Cold War escalated, Americans saw the centralization of power in the Soviet Union and China as a social evil reminiscent of Fascist dictatorship. But at the same time, some in the U.S. also worried that their own governmental, social and economic institutions were growing increasingly centralized. As a result of World War II, bureaucracy had been enlarged and economic authority and resources concentrated to a handful of large corporations. Against this growing concern of centralized domestic power structure, intellectuals began to search for an alternative principle of shaping society. From this perspective, a new trend in art and culture that put emphasis on interactive practices and decentralized epistemology emerged to challenge the cultural dominance of central authority.¹²⁰

Belgrad sees this practice of artistic decentralization in John Cage's radical decentering of

¹²⁰ Daniel Belgrad, “Democracy, Decentralization, and Feedback,” in *American Literature and Culture in an Age of Cold War: a Critical Reassessment*, ed. Steven Belletto and Daniel Grausam (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012), 59-61.

traditional music. He pays attention to the way John Cage rejected the authority of composers in controlling sound. In his musical philosophy, the distinction between musical sound and noise was blurred. With this radical idea of sound and music, he defined a composer's role as letting sound be heard rather than controlling the sound in the way other musicians had done. The extreme form of this musical theory was his famous piece *4'33"*. What is striking in this piece is that musicians play nothing and remain absolutely silent while the audience hears whatever their ears catch, including the sound of their own coughing and throat-clearing. In this way, the audience contributes to the music that they are also listening to. Moreover, the feedback loop is pluralistic; each member of the audience has a different experience as each hears different things in their immediate proximity.

This avant-garde musical theory and practice was in keeping with Japanese discourse on wide shows. The media critics' understanding of Japanese wide shows was associated with the notion of an authentic media experience for viewers by live-broadcasting what was really happening in the society. Delivering news to the audience as it was unfolding in real time, news shows were believed to let the audience interpret a news event rather than explaining it for them. This methodology of unmediated media practice was in parallel with what John Cage pursued in his musical experiment. Moreover, the discourse on the way that wide shows put the show hosts on par with the viewers and created a communication loop between the audience and the shows reminds us of John Cage's music where audience are placed on the same level with the musicians and listen to the "music" that they themselves are making.¹²¹

The idea of a feedback loop was supported by the principle of "purposelessness" that was advocated against the reckless force of "social engineering" that super-sized postwar political

¹²¹ Belgrad, "Democracy, Decentralization, and Feedback," 64-68.

and social organizations focused on. Anthropologist Gregory Bateson was among many U.S. intellectuals who warned against increasing pressure of social management from the beginning of World War II. He advocated a principle of democratic thinking that considered democracy not only as an ultimate goal but also as a means to achieving itself. Bateson believed that democracy could not be accomplished through inculcation. Rather, the process by which democratic thoughts emerged what truly distinguished democratic societies from dictatorship. Democratic education, he argued, must give students, namely the people of the society, an active role in discussing the merits of democracy in comparison with other political systems. Accordingly, democratic social organizations should abandon their purpose in order to achieve their true purpose. Bateson's idea of "purposelessness" reverberated in media critics' and producers' discussion of Japanese weeklies' editing principles. The unique mixture of various images, articles and interviews within the early postwar Japanese weekly magazines was seen as a result of a deliberate abandonment of their purpose.

The "purposelessness" in compiling of Japanese weekly magazines was best exemplified in *Shūkan asahi*, in which a long-time *Asahi shinbun* reporter Ougiya Shōzō took on the editorship from 1947 to 1958. One of his contributions to *Shūkan asahi* was strengthening feature stories, which would become the main driving force behind the weekly's popularity in the postwar. Ougiya's approach to the feature stories was to write articles as a group rather than having one reporter in charge. He learned this methodology of collective article-writing from the renowned journalist Ōya Sōichi when he worked for Ōya's magazine, *Jinbutsu hyōron* (The Personal Review, 1933-1934). Ōya was also known for his "declaration of non-ideology" (*mushisō no sengen*) which he wrote in *Chūō kōron* in 1955. In this article, he stated his intension of pursuing "non-ideology" in a world where the ideological conflict of the two political systems was

becoming ever more intense.¹²² The collective article-writing of Ougiya's *Shūkan asahi* was also based on this "non-ideology" approach because the collective efforts were less likely to be ideologically driven than articles by a single writer. This editing principle of "non-ideology" and collective writing also contributed to the success of publishing company-originated weeklies, which were at the center of postwar Japan's weekly fever. Without established news networks, those publishers used freelancers who worked as a group in which "datamen" gathered information and "anchors" came up with articles out of the gathered information. These freelancers believed that they were in a better position to come closer to the "truth" because of their independence to the magazine's editorial board.¹²³ The weeklies' editorial boards were also willing to allow those freelancers latitude in making articles provided the articles turned a profit.¹²⁴

Cultural critic Ueno Kōshi observes that what we saw in the surprising combination of the two "Michiko" in the young women's weekly *Josei jishin* was also a result of the editorial board's spirit of "non-ideology" that welcomed anything as a subject matter of the magazine.¹²⁵ However, the "non-ideology" did not necessarily mean populism. He argues that it is very difficult for one to stay true to "non-ideology" when the external pressure of the dominant ideology is so powerful. Therefore a thoroughgoing open-mindedness was needed in order to invigorate the magazine with a range of new subjects that would challenge the conventional approach to magazine-making. The "non-ideology" approach was also found in the style in which the wide shows were produced. As we discussed above, under the motto of "from politics

¹²² Yoshida and Okada ed., *Zasshi media no bunkashi*, 77. For details of Ōya group's collective work in *Jinbutsu hyōron*, see Etō Fumio, Tsurumi Shunsuke and Yamamoto Akira ed., *Kōza komyunikēshon 4 taishūbunka no sōzō* (Tokyo: Kenkyūshashuppan, 1973), 294-309.

¹²³ Yoshida and Okada ed., *Zasshi media no bunkashi*, 141; Ueno, *Nikutai no jidai*, 207.

¹²⁴ Ueno, *Nikutai no jidai*, 207.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 206-207

to strips,” *IIPM* covered large ground including current political and international issues as well as light entertainment.¹²⁶

Above all, both Japanese wide shows and weeklies were characterized as being deeply embedded in their audience’s life. These mass media forms were first and foremost considered to be intimate to the texture lived experience. Critics highlighted the way wide shows connected “hard news topics” to real life issues, and weeklies depicted celebrities as just another “human being” in the audience.¹²⁷ Delving into everyday life in order to find an essence of the world resonated with a trend of U.S. avant-garde art in Cold War. Belgrad discusses writer John Updike and his short story “Packed Dirt, Churchgoing, a Dead cat, a Traded car.” This story, Belgrad emphasizes, is striking because there was no coherent narrative leading readers toward a fixed conclusion. Instead, the whole story is composed of a string of anecdotal, incidental and quotidian events that don’t seem to be related to each other. But, he suggests, the seemingly chaotic deployment of random events is Updike’s strategy to grope for truth. Updike believed the truth of the world resided not in overarching principles or theories but in a concrete daily life that “is anecdotal, narrative, the snug opaque quotidian.”¹²⁸ By describing how the seemingly disorderly everyday moments were reiterated, Updike sought to find a decentralized authority that somehow regulated those disparate events.

With the emphasis on feedback loops between the media and the audience, decentralized communication that was opened to many possibilities, and finding the essential in the fabric of everyday life, Japanese wide shows, in close connection with weekly culture, became the center of a discourse that highlighted mass media’s potential in countering the incessant force of “social

¹²⁶ Shiga, *Terebi bangumi kotohajime*, 366.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 370.

¹²⁸ Quoted in Belgrad, “Democracy, Decentralization, and Feedback,” 70.

engineering” by ever-powerful postwar Japanese bureaucracy and industry. When we expand this vision of decentralization and democratic social relations outside Japan, we can find the Cold War culture in the U.S. where intellectuals and artists promoted alternative ideas that advocated the feedback loop over centralized authority, and truth in everyday life over abstract ideologies. In the previous chapters, we discussed how deeply Japanese society was involved in the Cold War world order during the 1950s and 1960s. While ideological struggle continued to dominate society and culture during this period, an impulse to protect democracy from increasing monopoly and concentration of power was manifested through alternative media discourse in Japan as well as in the U.S.

Conclusion

The discourse on wide shows in 1960s Japanese television began with the very categorization of the genre. In the early years of the wide shows, commentators preferred to use “news show” over “wide show” because they focused on this new genre’s potential in delivering news differently from conventional newscasts. The live on-the-scene news coverage and timely interviews were the focal points of the wide shows that attracted large audiences in living rooms across Japan. The critics and broadcasters hoped that the “news shows” would challenge the existing mode of newscast that had merely transmitted prepared news script to the audience. They believed that this type of one-way communication in newscast had not changed since wartime when the NHK radio news had been under the tight control of the state. Therefore, wide shows were launched with great expectation that they would enrich democracy by posing new relations between television and audience.

It is difficult to assess how much this hope has been realized in the history of wide shows. It

is also true that wide shows gradually shifted weight to entertainment segments, becoming a target of “vulgar” TV criticism.¹²⁹ However, the discourse around the wide shows certainly suggested the possibilities of the genre and, by extension, of television itself; TV viewers’ “authentic” media experience, a dynamic mixture of diverse elements based on the audience’s life world, and two-way communication between media and audience were intensely discussed topics in light of wide shows’ popularity. In this chapter, I discussed this discourse on wide shows in conjunction with postwar weekly magazines that dominated Japanese reading culture in the late 1950s through the 1970s. The weeklies were indispensable for understanding wide shows not just because the new program format was influenced by the way weeklies were produced. Other than sharing similar properties, wide shows and weeklies together created an everyday media culture where audience constantly interacted with the mass media forms on a daily basis in coping with their everyday issues.

The everyday use of media in which media and the audience communicate with each other on an equal basis was what media critics and producers pointed out as a democratic media practice. This media practice was promoted against the backdrop of Japan’s postwar democratic thoughts, which emphasized a feedback loop in communication between social institutions and the public, which was expected to eliminate the possibilities of authoritarianism that prewar Japan had experienced. This call for allowing democratic communication into mass media, thus alleviating the fear of authoritarian government and society, was echoed in the global Cold War culture. When the two politico-economic systems accused each other of making a centralized power structure and rejecting democracy, the public in industrialized states worried about the centralization of power within their own political institutions. In the United States, artists and

¹²⁹ Etō, “Nyusushō no kōsatsu,” 78.

cultural theorists conceived this danger in terms of a small group of elites monopolizing power structures of the society, and proposed a feedback loop model as an alternative mode of communication that would help shape a democratic postwar society. While the scope of their democratic vision mainly remained within the artistic world, a similar dynamic giving rise to innovations in democratic communication was at the center of Japanese popular media discourse, where alternative mode of thoughts were actively discussed and created through democratic discourses.

Chapter 4. Faltering Housewives: Daytime Melodrama and Female TV Viewers' Daydream

Introduction

Amidst the political turmoil of 1960, with the memory of the fierce fight of the Anti-Security Treaty protest still fresh in people's mind, Fuji TV, a start-up Tokyo broadcaster founded a year previously, launched an erotically-charged weekly TV melodrama *Nichinichi no haishin* (Days of Betrayal) in July. Targeting the female audience at home, this story of adultery, betrayal and dirty secrets was broadcast into Japanese living rooms at 1:00 pm every Monday. In particular, housewives loved this show, which delivered an unprecedented stream of stimulating love scenes in the broad daylight of early afternoon.

This drama set a new trend of Japanese daytime television, creating a genre called daytime melodrama (*hirumero*). TV stations including Fuji TV itself, quickly followed suit and rolled out numerous drama series revolving around sexual scenes and stories of adultery. While this type of drama series gained enormous popularity among female TV viewers, TV critics and even some housewives expressed concerns over the "vulgarity" of it. First of all, critics pointed out that those dramas contained extremely provocative scenes for home viewers. "Unnecessary" close-up shots of love scenes were common. Some of those dramas also demonstrated a high degree of violence and cruelty. *Akai satsugi* (Red Murderous Intent) of TBS, 1966, featured a story of a housewife who was sexually assaulted during her husband's business trip; the rapist frequently visited her, seeking to take advantage of the initial rape. *Yūryōdōro* (Turnpike) of NTV, 1967, featured a story in which a married woman became a hostess of a bar, and was frequently the target of patron's lewd comments, such as, "I like the way you act like an amateur," and "You

must be expensive because you are married.”¹ Sometimes, the love scenes caused trouble with sponsors. Fuji TV’s melodrama *Tobira no naka no fūkei* (The Scene inside the Door) almost lost its sponsors because of its obscenity. Having seen the preview, the sponsor suddenly revoked sponsoring it right before the broadcasting of the first installment. The sponsor returned to the drama only after the problematic scenes were removed.² Some viewers did not like the style of melodramas that only focused on highlighting love scenes. They believed that those melodramas were treating viewers as an idiot.³ Several of the daytime melodramas were understood as “vulgar” because they were considered to be giving instant bodily pleasure rather than creating lasting values. An annual report of the BPIC (Broadcasting Program Improvement Committee), the TV monitoring organization that I mentioned in the previous chapters, criticized the melodramas because they were “stimulating the potential of base human nature, and encouraging human instinct to overcome the reason by connecting with other social and individual circumstances.”⁴

Regardless of the criticism, these melodramas attracted a large audience. Given the air time, it was no surprise that most of the melodrama fans were housewives. These female viewers, while watching those dramas, fell in a daydream of living other women’s life. However, those love scenes alone cannot explain the rise of the popularity of the daytime melodramas. In order to clarify the nature of the cultural dynamic that the daytime TV dramas generated, it is necessary to examine the relation of the programs with their female viewers in the context of the

¹ Nihon Hōsō Rengōkai ed., *Yori yoi hōsō no tame ni: hōsō bangumi kōjō iinkai hōkoku 65-68* (Tokyo: Hōsō Bangumi Kōjō Iinkai, 1970), 103-107.

² “Yoromeki dorama wo tsuihō?” *Asahi shinbun*, July 11, 1964, 9.

³ Sakemi Ayako, “Shufu to hōsō,” *Hōsō asahi* 97 (1962): 34; Kasagi Yachiyo, “‘Mama daigakusei’ no yume,” *Hōsō asahi* 97 (1962): 32; Miyashiro Otoyā et al., “Zadankai: hōsō wa josei no mono,” *Hōsō asahi* 97 (1962): 54; “Terebi shūhyō: ‘aiyoku shiin’ wa komaru,” *Yomiuri shinbun*, December 9, 1964, 11.

⁴ Nihon Hōsō Rengōkai, *Yori yoi hōsō no tame ni*, 107.

Cold War gender politics. Those dramas became popular among the housewife viewers because the stories, while quite fantastic, nonetheless successfully articulated life issues that resonated with their target audience. Therefore, through examining the cultural dynamic that the daytime TV melodramas created, we can revisit important aspects of the struggles of postwar Japanese housewives and the construction of Cold War domesticity. In order to do so, I will explore the historical background of the daytime TV melodrama with an eye on its intertextuality with other media such as literature, cinema and radio. After the genesis of this program genre is clarified, I will place these programs within the context of the Cold War cultural politics that shaped the new middle-class stratum along particular ideological lines. In this, my chapter will focus on what kind of role women were expected to play in postwar Japanese society and how the special circumstances of women's gender role were imbricated with viewing daytime melodramas.

The Beginning of Yoromeki Boom

The popularity of daytime melodrama had its origin in the late 1950s, when a few novels created a sensation by tackling the subjects of extra-marital affairs. In 1956, *Banka* (Elegy) by Harada Yasuko, *Hyōheki* (Precipice) by Inoue Yasushi and *Kagi* (Key) by Tanizaki Junichirō started this new trend, which had its peak with Mishima Yukio's *Bitoku no yoromeki* (The Faltering of Virtue) and Niwa Fumio's *Nichinichi no haishin* (Days of Betrayal) in 1957. These novels quickly became best-sellers because they successfully captured the imaginaries of female readership by describing the life of female protagonists in the middle of difficult situations involving love. The so-called *yoromeki* boom, whose name obviously came from Mishima's novel, owed much to the atmosphere of the age. Scholars were quick to point out that the abolition of the adultery clause in Japanese criminal code in 1947 had much to do with the

increased interests in extramarital relations. Discussing Mishima's novel, Nakamoto Saori argues that wives were able to imagine romance outside their marriage, which had not been possible before the revision of the criminal code.⁵

On the other side of the *yoromeki* boom lay an increasing interest in sexuality in the postwar era. Immediately after Japan's surrender to the Allied Powers, Japanese society experienced an ideological vacuum, in which materiality and everyday survival were the most important issues for people in the defeated nation. Under these circumstances, carnality became the primary focus in the popular culture. *Kasutori* magazines, which focused on explicit eroticism, found a great number of readers in the occupation era.⁶ In the literary world, writers like Tamura Taijirō declared a new fictional principle that sought to find truth of the age in women's bodies.⁷ This pursuit of eroticism quickly moved to the cinema, where films such as *Otome no seiten* (Sex Manual for Virgin, 1950), fulfilled desires of movie fans who were eager to see eroticism on screen. When the *yoromeki* boom hit the literary circle, films like *Taiyō no kisetsu* (The Season of Sun, 1956) and *Kurutta kajitsu* (Crazy Fruit, 1956) fascinated young movie fans with their bold expression of bodily desires and a powerful display of youthful fashion and style, encouraging them to pursue such new styles to become a part of *taiyōzoku* (sun tribe). Against this backdrop, *yoromeki* literature emerged and captured the imagination of female readers.⁸ The eroticism in those literary works was received by readers who were well-versed in the postwar culture of sexuality.

⁵ Nakamoto Saori, "Mishima Yukio Bitoku no yoromeki ron: 'yoromeki' būmu kara yomu," *Hiroshima daigaku daigakuin bungaku kenkyūka ronshū* 72 (2012): 98-99; Kan Satoko, "'Yoromeki' to josei dokusha: Niwa Fumio, Funahashi Seiichi, Inoue Yasushi no chūkan shōsetsu wo megutte," *Bungaku* 9:2 (2008): 57-58.

⁶ On *kasutori* culture, see John Dower, "Chapter 4 Cultures of Defeat," *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999)

⁷ On postwar carnal literature, see Douglas N. Slaymaker, *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004)

⁸ Nakamoto, "Mishima Yukio Bitoku no yoromeki ron," 98.

In addition, the female readership of *yoromeki* literature saw in the novels an opportunity to look back on their life in the past and face their personal desire, which had never been possible when they were in their youth. In a roundtable discussion on the *yoromeki* boom, a renowned novelist Hirabayashi Taiko argued that middle-aged female readers fell in love with those stories because they were able to liberate their emotions, which they could never have done when they were young.⁹ Going through war, defeat and occupation, these women experienced hardship that did not allow room for fulfilling their individual desires. After the war, many of them were pushed into marriage and childcare. Now, with the economy recovering and material life improving for many, Japanese women saw in popular culture a chance to be true to their own self.¹⁰

To understand the place of *yoromeki* literature in postwar Japanese society, it is necessary to situate it within a larger inter-media context. The *yoromeki* culture spread through other popular media—cinema, radio and finally, television. Once it became obvious readers loved *yoromeki* novels, film companies and radio stations were quick to take advantage of the trend. Most of the *yoromeki* novels were adapted to film and radio drama soon after they became a hit.¹¹ *Bitoku no yoromeki* was adapted to a radio drama in September 1957 and to a film in October the same year, only three and four months after the publication of the novel, respectively. The changing media environment gave writers a new platform through which they could reach a larger audience; the *yoromeki* literature was in many respects the “test case” for these new inter-media and intertextual

⁹ Ōya Sōichi et al., “Zadankai: ‘yoromeki’ jidai,” *Fujin kōron* 42:11 (1957): 73.

¹⁰ Ichibangase Yasuko, “Gendai katei fujinron: sono ishiki to terebi to,” *Hōsō bunka* 24:5 (1969): 8; Kan Satoko, “‘Yoromeki’ to josei dokusha,” 58.

¹¹ Kōno Marie, “Bungei merodorama no eigashiteki ichi: yoromeki no keifu, shōhinka, hihyōteki juyō,” *Rikkyō eizoshintaigaku kenkyū* 1 (2013): 28.

processes.¹²

Because this genre of stories was extensively publicized—perhaps exhausted—in many novels, very much exhausted by novels, films and radio dramas, critical reviews on the *yoromeki* literature were already well underway even before the TV drama versions were made. Most of the critiques of the *yoromeki* stories focused on the fact that, while many *yoromeki* novels and movies sought only to cash in on a popular new genre, they nonetheless challenged existing social norms and sexual morals. The participants of the roundtable discussion mentioned above generally agreed that adultery described in the *yoromeki* literature posed a challenge to the monogamous marriage institution, secrecy in discussing bodies, and the authority of the dominant family system.¹³ A literary critic Yamamoto Kenkichi positively assessed *yoromeki* literature's role in destroying taboos in Japanese literature that had led most authors to refrain from dealing explicitly with such contentious subjects.¹⁴ Such positive evaluations were based on the assumption that adultery itself could be considered as a desire for a woman to be a mistress of her own life in a male-dominant society.¹⁵ Nakamoto argues that, empowered by the liberation of sex, married women sought to escape from the moral restraint of the domestic role as a mother and a wife, and this desire was mediated by the *yoromeki* stories in novels, films, and even TV melodramas.¹⁶

These positive views were opposed by critiques that emphasized the moral degeneration that the *yoromeki* culture could cause. Another literary critic Sako Junichirō condemned *yoromeki* novels because they depicted adultery as something fascinating, and admonished

¹² Nakamoto, "Mishima Yukio Bitoku no yoromeki ron," 94-95.

¹³ Ōya et al., "'yoromeki' jidai," 67.

¹⁴ Yamamoto Kenkichi, "Kantsū shōsetsuron," *Gunzō* 12:10 (1957): 119.

¹⁵ Takeda Taijun, "Yoromeki to Nihon josei," *Fujin kōron* 43:12 (1958). Reprinted in Takeda Taijun, *Watakushi no eiga kanshōhō* (Tokyo: Ushio Shuppansha, 1978), 40-41.

¹⁶ Nakamoto, "Mishima Yukio Bitoku no yoromeki ron," 98-99.

readers not to forget that adultery was evil.¹⁷ Even if these critical views did not foreground the morality of adultery, male critics in particular tended to view female protagonists in the *yoromeki* novels and films as childish, superficial and isolated from their own reality.¹⁸

This type of moral judgment on the literature and films that illustrated the life of women in extra-marital affairs persisted and expanded in the age of television. As television infiltrate everyday life, TV stations wasted no time using these popular stories to attract female audiences. In this way, the *yoromeki* culture moved to the TV screen and rekindled the controversy of depicting female adultery in fiction.

Daytime Melodrama

The first TV station to take this opportunity was Fuji TV. In 1960, only one year after its opening, Fuji TV was struggling to compete in the TV broadcasting that had thus far been dominated by NHK, NTV and TBS. In order to create a niche market, Fuji TV tried new things including the production of a daytime melodrama adapting *yoromeki* literature.¹⁹

When a Fuji TV producer Okada Tarō submitted a plan to launch a melodrama in the time slot right after lunch to his supervisor, it was considered unrealistic.²⁰ This early afternoon timeframe had predominantly shown information programs (*kyōyō bangumi*) for housewives including cooking shows and newscast.²¹ These programs did not fare well in the ratings, but replacing these programs with melodramas with sensational scenes was, in a sense, breaking the

¹⁷ Yamamoto, “Kantsū shōsetsuron,” 121.

¹⁸ Kōno, “Bungei merodorama no eigashiteki ichi,” 39-40.

¹⁹ Harada Nobuo, *Terebi dorama 30-nen* (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shinbunsha, 1983), 84; “Yoromeki dorama wo tsuihō?” 9.

²⁰ Harada, *Terebi dorama 30-nen*, 84.

²¹ Nakamura Shōichi et al. “Hiru sagari no shufu bangumi: ‘ryōri bangumi’ kara ‘yoromeki’ dorama e no tenkai,” *YTV Report* 57 (1968): 41.

convention of the TV broadcasting.²²

Okada picked up this idea of making early-afternoon melodrama when he was working at Nippon Cultural Broadcasting (Bunka Hōsō), a radio station that was a co-founder of Fuji TV with Nippon Broadcasting System (Nippon Hōsō). At this radio station, he saw melodrama series successfully attract housewives in the morning, and decided to bring it into the production of TV drama after he moved to Fuji TV.²³

From the beginning, Okada was determined to make a serial drama with a heavy dose of eroticism. Prior to this drama, his first producing experience at Fuji TV involved a drama that was intended for the National Arts Festival (*Geijutsusai*), but ran into trouble as it included a kissing scene for the first time in Japanese television. The kissing scene alarmed the Fuji TV executives, who eventually halted the project. However, a few months later, he was able to insert this scene in his new melodrama project. When Okada was planning on this daytime melodrama, he first considered an adaptation of Itō Sei's *Hanran* (Overflow) as his first work, but he switched it to Niwa Fumio's *Nichinichi no haishin*, thinking that this adulterous story would allow him to shoot more provocative scenes.²⁴ *Nichinichi no haishin* also had a good track record of adaptation into radio drama (1957) and a film (1958). Both adaptations were highly successful, and especially the film version attracted female viewers. Therefore, *Nichinichi no haishin* was a safe choice for the first TV melodrama targeting female viewers.²⁵

In this way, the TV drama version of *Nichinichi no haishin* was launched in July 1960, marking the beginning of the daytime TV melodrama age. The story of this drama shows a tragic destiny and a forbidden love of the heroine Yashiro Ikuko, a mistress of a wealthy jeweler who

²² Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō* (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan), 2001, 503.

²³ "Tarento hanjōki 273: hiru no merodorama 1," *Yomiuri shinbun*, April 24, 1971, 23.

²⁴ Harada, *Terebi dorama 30-nen*, 84-85.

²⁵ Uryū Tadao, "Hiru sagari no merodorama," *TBS Chōsa jōhō* 105 (1967): 33.

saved her from destitution and kept her on his side to abuse her. At a spa resort, she encounters a chairman of a business magazine Doya Hiroyuki, who has a bedridden wife. They fall in love with each other, and develop a secret relationship, cheating on their own partners. Their romance takes them to the point that Ikuko escapes from the grasp of the jeweler, but the death of Hiroyuki's wife and her unconditional trust of her husband till the death makes him decide to break with Ikuko.²⁶

Without a doubt, this narrative involved eroticism. Before he went into production, Okada declared to the station executives his intent to shoot love scenes. Along with the love scenes, close-ups were frequently used to magnify the emotions of the characters, which was very rare at the time in the TV drama production. This daring production style, combined with the provocative story and unconventional scheduling, created sensation and lifted his drama to a national-scale success as we discussed in the introduction.²⁷ Encouraged by the success of *Nichinichi no haishin*, Fuji TV continued to release drama series with adaptations from *yoromeki* novels, creating the TV version of the *yoromeki* boom.

These *yoromeki* dramas, following in the footsteps of the original novels, were made to cater to the female audience. First, the scheduling of this thirty-minute drama at 1pm was obviously aiming at female viewers at home. At this time of day, after all morning chores were done, housewives were able to sit down in front of the television set and enjoy watching those melodramas as if they were at a movie theater of their own. After *Nichinichi no haishin* proved successful, other competitors also joined the competition of daytime melodrama. NTV and TBS responded to the popularity of Fuji TV's *yoromeki* drama. What they brought into the production

²⁶ "Hiru bangumi ni merodorama," *Asahi shinbun*, June 28, 1960, 5.

²⁷ Harada, *Terebi dorama 30-nen*, 87.

of daytime melodrama was to make the best of the housewives' rhythm of everyday life. Fuji TV's daytime melodrama series was scheduled on a weekly basis. Therefore, viewers had to wait for a week to watch the next episode. In response to this, NTV and TBS offered a series of weekday fifteen-minute dramas that aimed at creating a watching habit of the viewers. The idea came from an analysis that, at the time Fuji TV's melodrama was being broadcast, other channels' ratings were also higher than usual. This meant that viewers tended to turn the TV set on by habit at the time melodramas were offered.²⁸ Taking advantage of such habitual viewing, in 1962, NTV and TBS launched their daytime melodrama series scheduled in weekday fifteen-minute units. Now, viewers were invited to watch a serialized story of melodrama every weekday at the same time slot. This strategy worked especially well for TBS, which finally beat Fuji TV in the battle of the daytime melodrama.²⁹ Against the offensive of the every weekday strategy by NTV and TBS, Fuji TV, in return, aired its own every-weekday melodrama in the summer of 1964. With this fierce fight over housewives' everyday cycle, daytime melodramas captured the minds of female viewers in the living room throughout the 1960s.³⁰

This new serial drama format contributed to finding new TV viewers in the early afternoon. According to the NHK national time-usage survey (Kokumin seikatsu jikan chōsa) in 1960 and in 1965, female viewers in their thirties who watched television between 1:00 and 2:00 pm more than doubled, from less than 10% to more than 25%, during this five-year time span.³¹

Indeed, Japanese wives were among the best TV fans. The NHK national time-usage survey in 1965 reveals that housewives had an average of four hours and ten minutes of leisure time on weekdays, during which three hours and fifty minutes were spent watching television. Looking

²⁸ "Tarento hanjōki 275: hiru no merodorama 3," *Yomiuri shinbun*, April 29, 1971, 21.

²⁹ Nihon Hōsō Rengōkai, *Yori yoi hōsō no tame ni*, 100.

³⁰ "Tarento hanjōki 276: hiru no merodorama 4," *Yomiuri shinbun*, May 8, 1971, 21.

³¹ Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō*, 503.

at this trend, there was an opinion that housewives were wasting their newly created leisure time by spending too much of it in front of the television. Japanese housewives' love of television watching was often compared to their Western counterparts' attitude to leisure time, which purportedly focused on more "productive" activities such as volunteering in community and educational activities.³²

First of all, the rise of the nuclear family contributed to housewives' increased TV viewing time. With the family size getting smaller, housewives were often alone, without their parents-in-law around, and with children at school or at private academies. The TV set became many housewives' best friend.³³ Many have claimed that extra leisure time was created thanks to the increased use of home electronics. While it was true that Japanese housewives benefitted from the new modern kitchen, its time-saving effect was ambiguous. When we compare housewives' average housework hours between 1960 and 1965, only thirteen minutes were reduced. However, during the same time span, their TV viewing time increased by about two-and-a-half hours. This discrepancy suggests that housewives were watching television not just during their leisure time, but while they were doing their housework, as well. This "multitasking" was the central characteristic of housewives' viewership.³⁴ The survey also reveals that the longer housewives do their housework, the more time they tend to spend watching television. This meant that Japanese housewives were heavy TV viewers not because they had too much leisure time to spend; on the contrary, they relied on TV precisely because they were still tied to their home duties and could not secure a sizable amount of time to do other leisure activities that involved

³² Kikukawa Kiyoshi et al., "Zadankai: 'fujin bangumi' kara 'katei bangumi' e," *Hōsō bunka* 24:5 (1969): 27; Ichibangase, "Gendai katei fujinron," 7.

³³ Ichibangase, "Gendai katei fujinron," 8.

³⁴ Yoshida Jun, "shichō jikan, taidō, shumoku: sono gaikyō," *Hōsō bunka* 24:5 (1969): 12-13; Miyashiro et al., "hōsō wa josei no mono," 47.

leaving their domicile.³⁵ Therefore, those housewives who always had to “multitask” between housework and television tended to habitually turn on the TV set and seldom paid full attention to whatever they were watching. The strategy of airing short daytime melodrama every weekday was perfectly aligned with these viewers’ habits.

Gender Role in the Cold War Japan

The popularity of daytime melodrama in 1960s Japanese television tells us about the formation of Japanese women as TV viewers. Therefore, melodrama viewership offers an interesting lens to examine how the postwar gender roles were established for Japanese women in the context of changing family ideals. This analysis of the postwar women and family pays attention to the cultural alignment of Japanese society to the global Cold War regime. Stable nuclear families revolving around women’s skillful household management was one of the core concepts emphasized by the “free world.” In Japan, a similar cultural process was in progress through 1950s and 1960s.

Scholars often mention the “kitchen debate” between U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev as a microcosm of the Cold War ideological fight. At the American National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959, Nixon, in conversation with Khrushchev, asserted that true American superiority lay not in the stockpiles of weapons but in American homes that were filled with labor-saving appliances and happy housewives managing their household efficiently by using those useful tools. A highlight of this debate was at the “model home” section of the exhibition. This six-room ranch-style model home, filled with consumer durables, were a miniature of the postwar American dream that included spacious suburban

³⁵ Yoshida, “shichō jikan, taidō, shumoku,” 13.

properties supposedly available for all classes, and convenient home appliances that were designed to eliminate the drudgery of housework.³⁶ Indeed, this middle-class suburban home was the centerpiece of the U.S. Cold War ideology. Elaine Tyler May, in her seminal study about the postwar American family, emphasizes that after World War II, Americans gravitated toward the ideals of the suburban home that embodied affluence, security and order. All in all, suburban homes were where the “American way of life” was substantiated. Federal funds and lending banks encouraged white working class families to purchase this ideal home and become a member of middle-class society. As a result, massive internal migration took place from urban cores to newly developed suburban areas. White families and many second generation European immigrants joined this movement to a new life, leaving behind their ethnic communities in the cities.³⁷

At the center of this new family order lay the role of housewives who, assisted by the convenient home appliances that Nixon boasted of to Khrushchev, were expected to professionally manage household matters, nurture family members and fulfill wifely duties, both emotional and erotic. Interestingly, Nixon particularly emphasized that the strength of the capitalist system was that it made women’s life much easier. Women in the U.S. could now enjoy their life with the help of the home appliances that free enterprise offered, and focus their energy on nurturing other family members and themselves. May argues that this image of women in family was a product of the deliberate ideological efforts on the part of the U.S. government, in concert with experts in the social sciences, media and other social institutions. Women were expected to leave the jobs that they had obtained during the war, get married, and become a full-

³⁶ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 19-22.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

time housewife.³⁸

This postwar femininity that focused on women's domestic role was also a core concept emphasized in the consolidation of gender roles in postwar Japan. Just as postwar femininity and family institutions in the West were articulated in line with the exigencies of U.S. governmental policy, banking business and media, so too were Japanese postwar gender roles formulated by a series of movements led by Japanese government, business circles, media and civil society. In Japan, the role of business interests was crucial in the construction of postwar gender dynamics. In his study of the New Life Movement in the early postwar period, Andrew Gordon illuminates how Japanese corporations became hegemonic institutions whose power infiltrated the fabric of everyday life, in the process of initiating the life reform movement centering on their employees' families. He points out that the business community enthusiastically pushed forward with a movement of rationalizing their employees' home economics and intervening in family reproduction in the 1950s. This corporate campaign, in conjunction with the Japanese cabinet's own version of the New Life Movement that focused on frugality, moral reform and family planning, called on the employees' wives to play a central role in planning their family size, and rationalizing family economy. Companies' New Life agents organized housewives into small groups and encouraged voluntary activities in the meetings. The agents also arranged lectures and cultural activities in which these housewives could participate.³⁹

This hegemonic process conducted through Japanese government and corporations played a pivotal role in solidifying "proper" gender roles. Housewives now emerged as central figures

³⁸ Ibid., 152.

³⁹ Andrew Gordon, "Managing the Japanese Household: The New Life Movement in Postwar Japan," *Social Politics* 4:2 (1997): 261-263.

who would take responsibility of improving their families' everyday life.⁴⁰ Such an effort of coopting families into the company-led movement was significant when placed in the context of the company's relation with its union. Gordon argues that this corporate effort succeeded in winning the minds of the housewives who would otherwise have remained under the influence of the husbands and their radical union movement.⁴¹

The central agenda of the New Life Movement, rationalizing the household, was connected to and completed by household consumption. As decision-makers of the home economy, housewives were a crucial building block of postwar Japanese consumer society. The late 1950s and 1960s has been described as an age of consumer revolution in Japan. Spearheaded by electronics goods consumption, consumerism swept the entire nation, contributing to postwar economic growth, changing people's everyday life, and most importantly, creating the life of the Japanese middle-class. Studying the rise of consumer capitalism, Simon Partner convincingly demonstrates how electrical companies carried out a comprehensive ideological campaign to attract potential consumers to the ideal of the "bright life," in which the image of happy housewives was central. As Nixon stressed in Moscow in 1959 the benefit that America's new modern home provided for housewives, Japanese electric companies highlighted how appliances like washing machines and refrigerators could save housewives' labor. Such an effort of selling labor-saving appliances by articulating the need to free housewives from the "feudal" mode of life was particularly intense in rural areas where the companies had to persuade local people that their wives' and daughter-in-laws' labor was actually worth saving.⁴²

The key in creating the desire to purchase those goods was the widespread conception of

⁴⁰ Ibid., 274.

⁴¹ Ibid., 261.

⁴² Simon Partner, "Creating the "Bright Life"," *Assembled in Japan: Electrical Goods and the Making of the Japanese Consumer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999)

joining the rising middle-class society. Due to the intensive advertising effort of the electric companies, electric appliances—washing machines, refrigerators, televisions, etc.—emerged as a marker of middle-class inclusion. More and more households, with the help of installment loans, purchased those convenient but expensive devices throughout 1950s and 1960s.⁴³ Of course, a TV set was one of the key items of the consumer electronics fever. Once a family purchased a TV set, however, the members of the family were exposed to a steady stream of images of American middle-class families, through watching American TV series such as *I Love Lucy* and *Father Knows Best*. These American TV shows played an important role in delivering the messages of Cold War cultural logic, according to which the ideal of the U.S. middle-class family could be realized in Japan as well. Soon, Japanese viewers saw Japanese TV dramas also emulate those images of affluent and efficient life, spreading images of a Japanese version of the middle-class family.⁴⁴

While American happy middle-class families were located in suburbia, postwar Japanese society created its own vision of suburban life. The so-called *danchi* (apartment complex) became an epitome of Japanese middle-class dreams.⁴⁵ In order to cope with the extreme urban housing shortage of the postwar, the Japanese government established the Japan Public Housing Association (Nihon Jūtaku Kōdan) in 1955. This association, along with private builders, started building apartments near metropolitan areas. Soon, this housing project caught media attention. People who moved into this newly developed housing area were labeled *danchi zoku* (danchi tribe). These people were pioneers of the modernized life—a small-sized family with a highly rationalized lifestyle.

⁴³ Ibid., 168-171.

⁴⁴ Marilyn Ivy, “Formations of Mass Culture,” in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 249.

⁴⁵ Partner, “Creating the “Bright Life”,” 177-178.

While *danchi* soon became a paradise of Japanese white-collar middle-class families with modernized kitchens and on-site public facilities, it was obvious that this apartment complex was not for everyone. Due to its relatively high rent and distance from urban cores, only a limited segment of the population with solid incomes could afford living in *danchi*.⁴⁶ The apartment supply was also far from resolving the growing housing shortage. By 1960, there were around 5,000 *danchi* complexes, accommodating only around a million people.⁴⁷ In 1961, in order to have a chance to move to a *danchi* apartment, an applicant had to beat the odds of one in thirty-one.⁴⁸

Therefore, in a sense, the *danchi* project had a more limited scope in comparison with America's suburbanization that occurred on a national scale. Still, we can draw a parallel between the two middle-class housing projects in the sense that they suggested an ideal middle-class lifestyle for all the population. The suburbs in both countries reflected a growing emphasis on the nuclear family. Just as the American suburbs were peopled largely by nuclear families, *danchi*, primarily due to the small size of the apartment unit (average of thirteen *tsubo* (about 463 ft²)), was home to newly married couples or parents with small children. A typical suburban family in both countries was composed of college graduates working in large corporations.⁴⁹ The suburbs' modern life, accompanied by electric goods, departed from traditional livelihood by bringing rationalization and efficiency into family dynamics. Suburban life signified a dream of middle-class inclusion; however, this dream involved a homogenization of lifestyle both in and outside the suburbs.⁵⁰ After all, the suburbs were home to the newly created middle-class

⁴⁶ Nishiyama Uzo, *Sumai kōkongaku: gendai nihon jōtakushi* (Tokyo: Shōkokusha, 1989), 345.

⁴⁷ Honda Seiya, "New Homes, New Habits," *Japan Quarterly* 7:1 (1960): 105-109.

⁴⁸ Nishiyama, *Sumai kōkongaku*, 346.

⁴⁹ May, *Homeward bound*, 28; Nishiyama, *Sumai kōkongaku*, 345.

⁵⁰ May, *Homeward bound*, 166; Nishiyama, *Sumai kōkongaku*, 346.

families that the “free world” vigorously promoted as a model life of its social system. Both states pushed for developing housing complexes that a middle-class family could afford. Suburbanization was a necessary corollary of governmental policies and the kinds of development those policies chose to facilitate. After the war, the U.S. government, despite extreme housing shortages in urban areas, pushed for a series of policies that encouraged, through subsidies, suburban home building and ownership.⁵¹ In Japan, the establishment of the Japan Public Housing Association in 1955 was an articulation of the government’s intention to focus on expanding middle-class neighborhoods outside urban centers at the expense of existing municipal-centered public housing projects for low-income families.⁵² The newly built suburban homes were to be equipped with consumer durable goods that symbolized affluence. In a sense, these spaces materialized the model home at the 1959 Moscow American National Exhibition.

However, the dream life of suburbia came with an emotional cost. One of the most significant struggles that the suburban dwellers experienced was a sense of loneliness. Families who migrated to American suburbia left behind extended families and traditional social ties such as ethnic and religious relations. Japan’s *danchi* dwellers were also separated from their old parents and communities, and moved to their apartment to lead their own private life.⁵³ While their new settings fitted into the desire to have a private lifestyle, they nonetheless had to go through a sense of isolation. This was especially true with housewives who were expected to carry out a role that had been largely determined for them by society. American suburban women often expressed feelings of confinement and isolation while being forced to perform endless

⁵¹ May, *Homeward bound*, 160-161.

⁵² Nishiyama, *Sumai kōkongaku*, 344.

⁵³ May, *Homeward bound*, 9; Peter Tillack, “Concrete Abstractions: Gotō Meisei’s Hapless Danchi Dwellers and Japan’s Economic Miracle,” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 23:2 (2015): 238; Tomiko Yoda, “The Rise and Fall of Maternal Society: Gender, Labor, and Capital in Contemporary Japan,” in *Japan after Japan*, ed. Tomiko Yoda and Harry Harootunian (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 246.

chores and the vast majority of the difficult work of child-rearing.⁵⁴ This was also the case for Japanese housewives in *danchi*. Japanese suburbs offered living units that were much smaller than their American counterparts. Therefore, many *danchi* housewives often felt trapped and confined in a literal sense, claustrophobic in their small rooms. Their rooms grew even smaller every time they purchased a new home appliance or a piece of furniture.⁵⁵ After they sent their husbands to work and children to school in the morning, the small home may have felt more like a prison than a private paradise.

The *danchi* housewives' struggle with spatial isolation was exacerbated by the heavy responsibility the Japanese middle-class housewives were urged to take in their home. Becoming a decision maker in the management of the home meant a great deal of work. Rationalization of home economy and lifestyle mainly fell on the housewives' shoulders. While convenient home appliances were available for their purchase, housewives worked even harder to manage the household budget to set aside funds for such purchases, sometimes driving them to low-paying part-time jobs. More importantly, they were forced to perform such duties without help from other family members. Their nuclear families already excluded their parents and in-laws. With husbands away from home during the day, they carried out housework and childcare very much on their own. Maids and nannies, who had been an integral part of the prewar bourgeois family, were now out of reach due to the high labor cost of these services after the war.⁵⁶

The biggest part of the middle-class housewives' duties was childcare and education. After she sent her husband to work, a middle-class wife was often left alone with her small children. In

⁵⁴ May, *Homeward bound*, 165.

⁵⁵ Partner, "Creating the "Bright Life"," 178; Nishiyama, *Sumai kōkongaku*, 346.

⁵⁶ Yoda, "The Rise and Fall of Maternal Society," 247.

an environment where mothers alone had to take full responsibility for childcare and had little chance to interact with real people outside of their families, housewives often confessed to feeling trapped and aphasic. A study about women in a Tokyo *danchi* in 1961 reveals that more than half of the mothers with children under three years of age confessed that they had no intimate friends or neighbors.⁵⁷ In worst cases, this psychological struggle resulted in infanticide or mother-child suicide (*boshishinjū*). Mothers were gripped by a notion that they were solely in charge of taking care of their children, so if their children were going through physical or mental problems, the mothers felt as if it were their fault.⁵⁸

Things became even more difficult when the children went to school. Postwar education reform put heavy emphasis on merit-based examination systems through which students' academic performance was evaluated and their advance to higher education was determined. The growing responsibility to supervise their children's performance at school and ensure their success in the examination system became a headache of middle-class mothers. When their children failed at school or caused trouble, they were the ones held responsible.⁵⁹

It was in this context that the *yoromeki* melodrama gained popularity. When there was no one in the home but themselves, many housewife viewers were attracted to the serial dramas that gave them a chance to imagine a different life than the one they were living. The sense of feeling trapped in the housewife's role gave female viewers reason to watch melodramas through which they vicariously experienced forbidden romance. As we saw in the criticism of *yoromeki* literature, by watching the *yoromeki* dramas, Japanese housewives sought to imagine a life that

⁵⁷ Morioka Kiyomi, "Life History and Social Participation of Families in Danchi, Public Housing Project, in a Suburb of Tokyo," *Japan Institute of International Affairs Annual Review* 5 (1969-70). Quoted in Christie W Kiefer, "The Danchi Zoku and the Evolution of Metropolitan Mind," in *Japan: the Paradox of Progress*, ed. Lewis Austin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 289.

⁵⁸ Kimura Sakae et al., *Kabe no naka no shufutachi* (Tokyo: Chōbunsha, 1983), 112-128.

⁵⁹ Yoda, "The Rise and Fall of Maternal Society," 247-248.

departed from their role as a wife and a mother. To those viewers, the sexual expression of the dramas signified a revolt against the traditional moral standards that confined their emotion.⁶⁰

In particular, the daytime melodramas were imagined to be watched by housewives living in *danchi*. Okada Tarō, the producer of *Nichinichi no haishin*, said, “I made this drama in consideration of a *danchi* housewife who watches this show with the curtains closed.”⁶¹ A renowned film critic Uryū Tadao also argued that *Nichinichi no haishin* was a perfect TV drama for a *danchi* wife who was suffering loneliness in the early afternoon.⁶²

Indeed, TV melodramas following in the footsteps of *Nichinichi no haishin* blatantly targeted *danchi* housewives. After *Nichinichi no haishin* and other Fuji TV’s daytime melodramas proved to be a housewife viewer’s favorite, TBS and Asahi Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), TBS’s partner station in Osaka, collaborated on a radio drama that had *danchi* housewives in mind as a target audience. This radio drama project, contrary to the melodrama’s convention of the adaptation of popular literary works, sought to create a new storyline that could grasp the attention of housewife listeners. In this, the method of the production team was to perform survey and roundtables with *danchi* women, and reflect their opinions in the storyline of the drama. The first round of the survey was conducted with female listeners in *danchi* areas around Tokyo including Hibarigaoka, Sakurazutsumi, Harumi and Kominato in November 1960. As a result of the survey, along with two roundtable discussions among Tokyo housewife listeners, it became clear that their target audience preferred melodrama, and extra-marital romance was the most desired subject.⁶³ Based upon this research, the new radio drama, *Ai no uzushio* (Whirling Love), was launched in January 1961 with a story of a

⁶⁰ Nakamoto, “Mishima Yukio Bitoku no yoromeki ron,” 98-99.

⁶¹ “Aa, dōdō no hirumero,” *Asahi shinbun*, June 22, 1973, 9.

⁶² Uryū, “Hiru sagari no merodorama,” 34.

⁶³ Hatta Eiichi, “Maaketto risaachi hōshiki dorama ni tsuite,” *Hōsō asahi* 81 (1961): 67-69.

married couple each of whom was having a romantic relationship outside their marriage.⁶⁴ This drama project, even during its broadcasting, continued to hold roundtables and surveys to track the *danchi* housewives' opinions. One month after going on the air, the production team conducted another round of surveys, this time in Hirakata and Kouri, which were *danchi* areas in Osaka. According to the result of the survey, the writer of the drama readjusted the storyline and fine-tuned the characters and roles.⁶⁵

Seen in this way, the popularity of the daytime melodrama was inseparable from the emergence of the *danchi*. An integral part of the Japanese government's effort to create a strong middle-class as the backbone of Japan's Cold War regime, this suburban housing project proceeded in the spirit of the cult of postwar domesticity that promoted "proper" gender roles for both men and women. While celebrated as a princess of the new middle-class home equipped with new modern gadgets, they were nonetheless subject to the campaign of reinforcing women's domestic roles vigorously carried out by government ministries and private sectors. The *danchi* life gave its female residents less than it promised. Caught up in the middle-class paradise of solitude and endless drudgery, these housewives were desperately looking for an escape, which they found every afternoon through their TV sets, the holy grail of middle-class status. A housewife confessed in a newspaper in 1968, "After the wedding, it became difficult for me to escape from family relationships and life issues. I can't easily slip out of such human relations. This is why I'm drawn to watching [these dramas] with sympathy."⁶⁶ A group of media scholars, in reviewing the popularity of *Nichinichi no haishin*, argued that as far as Japanese housewives and other women were burdened by heavy domestic and financial concerns, and as far as this

⁶⁴ Sakada Hiroo, "'Yoromeki risaachi' shimatsuki: 'ai no uzushio' no kyōkun," *Hōsō asahi* 97 (1962), 37.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 38-40.

⁶⁶ *Asahi shinbun*, February 18, 1968. Quoted at Nakamura et al., "Hiru sagari no shufu bangumi," 44.

situation provided a fertile ground for desiring dreams and changes in their life, daytime melodramas would not lose their supporters.

Now, the question is what kind of escape the daytime melodramas offered. Was it just a pastime of the housewives, or something of a deeper implication? If it meant something to the hardship of the middle-class women's life, what exactly was it? Examining what it meant to watch the dramas will help us better understand the cultural dynamics behind early afternoon media consumption.

Daytime Melodrama and Postwar Gender Politics

As with the discourse on *yoromeki* literature, the adultery stories that the daytime melodramas told were considered signifiers of the psychological independence of women who had been confined in the male-dominant institution of marriage. Especially *yoromeki* melodramas with their focus on adultery stood on the ground of the conflict between social conventions and personal desire. In many *yoromeki* dramas, female protagonists were the ones who went through affairs with other men. Critical views of *yoromeki* dramas found that such narratives helped housewife viewers to establish their subjecthood. Okada, when criticized for having too many love scenes in his drama, *Nichinichi no haishin*, answered that *yoromeki* dramas not only provided housewives with secret pleasure but also offered help for women to be independent and connected to larger society.⁶⁷ A group of media scholars, in reviewing the popularity of *Nichinichi no haishin*, argues, “We can’t attribute the popularity of *yoromeki* dramas to the housewives developing interests in adultery with more leisure time. One more thing behind it was the situation where their interests in selfhood and desires to establish their

⁶⁷ “Terebi wo kaeta: shōgen de tsuzuru hōsōshi 15, hiru no merodorama,” *Asahi shinbun*, September 9, 1982, 13.

self-identity and achieve emancipation had been subdued without being fully realized.” Quoting German sociologist Georg Simmel’s theory that secrets are an integral part of selfhood, these scholars also suggest that the central themes of the *yoromeki* dramas, secrets and betrayal, must be understood as articulating desire for true individuality.⁶⁸

However, many critics pointed out that the daytime melodrama’s effect of liberating women from their suffocating domesticity had its limitations. However emancipated the viewers might feel in watching those dramas, it was only a temporary escape, which would stop short of urging housewives to ask fundamental questions about their reality. The media scholar group do not miss this point, arguing that even though the experience of a constraining, suffocating reality was a key source of the popularity of daytime melodramas, those dramas are unable to provide the viewers with a critical viewpoint that questions the contradiction and oppression that underlay that reality.⁶⁹ The group goes on to maintain that the eventual function of those TV shows is to divert women’s eyes from the real problems of the status quo, distracting them with an exciting fantasy world in which they enjoy instant pleasure. The group also confirms that the housewife viewers’ drama-watching experience is vicarious, after all, and they tend to stay inside the “comfort zone” of their everyday life even though it is boring to them. To those who seek to stay safe within the frame of their daily life, the *yoromeki* dramas were considered ultimately to confirm the stability of their everyday lives as the female protagonists’ destiny in these melodramas was almost always tragic. After the housewives enjoyed the forbidden romance in the daytime, they nonetheless returned to reality with the return of their husbands and children.⁷⁰

While some viewers found in the daytime melodramas a sense of enhanced female

⁶⁸ Nakamura et al., “Hiru sagari no shufu bangumi,” 42.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 43.

⁷⁰ Nakamura et al., “Hiru sagari no shufu bangumi,” 43. Inoue Teruko, “Shichō bangumi no bunseki: sono gutaizō,” *Hōsō bunka* 24:5 (1969): 20.

subjectivity, the convention of this drama genre tended to describe the heroine of the drama as a victim of oppression and abuse rather than mistress of her own fate.⁷¹ The female protagonist of *Nichinichi no haishin*, Yashiro Ikuko, was portrayed as a victim of the cruelty of the wealthy jeweler who had saved her from destitution and took her as his mistress.⁷² This treatment of a melodrama heroine as a victim rather than a perpetrator of the sin was intended to justify her forbidden romance and convince viewers to sympathize her, but ascribed her role as a passive or at best reactive subject of the drama, rather than an active agent.⁷³

The broken promise of the daytime melodrama became even more obvious as the stations aired more such programs. Later, in the mid-60's, TV stations no longer followed the adultery-centered *yoromeki* line. In order to bring back the popularity of daytime melodramas that had been taken away by TBS, Fuji TV risked a slightly different take on the genre by adapting a prewar hit melodrama film, *Aizen katsura* (1938). Itself an adaptation of a novel with the same title, this story follows a female protagonist who, surviving her husband and raising a six-year-old child, works as a nurse in a hospital, whose director's son falls in love with her. The two, defying all sorts of odds, finally realize their love for each other in the end.⁷⁴ This love story with a happy ending became one of the greatest hits of prewar Japanese cinema. Remakes and sequels followed. Breaking the convention of the novel adaptation and going back to the prewar hit melodrama movie was a risky move, but the result was a record-breaking hit. With the highest rating of 38.5% and an average of 26.7%, the *Aizen katsura* succeeded in bringing the glory of daytime television back to Fuji TV, and changed the adultery-centered melodrama world to that

⁷¹ Nakamura et al., "Hiru sagari no shufu bangumi," 41-42.

⁷² "Hiru bangumi ni merodorama," 5.

⁷³ Nakamura et al., "Hiru sagari no shufu bangumi," 42.

⁷⁴ One episode of this drama series is available for viewing at the Broadcast Library, Yokohama.

of “pure love” (*junaimono*), which other stations would soon follow.⁷⁵ This drama established a new convention of melodrama that focused on portraying heroines as “pure,” highlighting the maternal side of the heroines, showing them protecting their children at all cost, and avoiding blatantly sexual scenes.⁷⁶

However, the focus on the “pure love” even further dampened the spirit of establishing the subjectivity of the female protagonists. Nagauchi Minako who played the heroine in this drama, complained that the narrative was too old-fashioned, her character too passive, with fewer lines compared to other recent dramas.⁷⁷ Without any breaking of social convention, any defying of the traditional relations, heroines were to endure a series of hardships before reaching their happy ending. They were depicted as “traditional woman” who would fulfill a maternal role, refrain from bodily pleasure and finally realize her love without ever seriously transgressing the traditional domestic roles ascribed to women. In this type of drama, there was no room for articulating the subjectivity of the female characters outside of the mother-housewife role.⁷⁸

It is interesting to note that while Japanese daytime TV melodrama culture began by attracting fans among housewives stressed by the mundane dreariness of married life, it wound up going back to addressing traditional values of female domesticity that postwar Japanese society celebrated. In a sense, both types of daytime melodramas, *yoromeki* and “pure love,” articulated what married women in 1960s Japan were going through. Adultery dramas showed the circumstances under which these women were placed, the one that was choking them to the extent that they dreamed about extra-marital relations. In the meantime, “pure love” stories demonstrated that with all the difficulties of their life, they were expected to endure, adhering to

⁷⁵ “Tarento hanjōki 276: hiru no merodorama 4,” 21.

⁷⁶ “Shinogi kezuru ‘hirumero,’” *Mainichi shinbun*, December 19, 1977. 5.

⁷⁷ “Tarento hanjōki 277: hiru no merodorama 5,” *Yomiuri shinbun*, May 11, 1971, 23.

⁷⁸ Uryū, “Hiru sagari no merodorama,” 38.

their traditional domestic roles. If they could do so, they would finally win a true love with her perfect partner.

Conclusion

After the success of *Aizen katsura* in 1965, the melodrama world came to be dominated by “pure love” stories. However, it soon became obvious that fierce competition among TV stations surrounding the 1:00 pm time slot would bring back sensational love scenes and shocking stories that would easily grasp the attention of housewife viewers. *Akai satsugi* (1966) and *Yūryōdōro* (1967) were among those that marked the melodrama productions’ returning to the *yoromeki* style.⁷⁹ In particular, TBS’s melodrama series *Anata nara dō suru?* (What would you do?, 1967) raised an eyebrow. As with the survey-based radio drama *Ai no uzushio*, TBS sought audience’s opinions on the question of “What would you do if you were in that situation?” with specific cases of unusual love affairs. Based on letters from the fans, the drama’s storylines were composed. Because the questions given to the audience often involved extra-marital affairs, this drama series was highly charged with sexual scenes, raising familiar concerns about “vulgar” television.

Despite such criticism, the daytime melodramas were securely settled in the daily broadcasting schedule, and continuously watched by home viewers throughout the period of high economic growth in the 1960s. Even if these viewers felt that these stories were “stupid” and far from reality, they nonetheless watched them, because they offered something that the housewife viewers could not ignore. The hardships that the melodrama heroines underwent overlapped with those of the viewers. Housewives during the 1960s were increasingly considered the center of

⁷⁹ Nihon Hōsō Rengōkai, *Yori yoi hōsō no tame ni*, 103.

household management. The emphasis on women's domestic role was particularly evident in the *danchi* middle-class communities where women's married life embodied a new kind of affluence, with all the electric appliances that the Japanese electric companies advertised as the zenith of the rationalized modern life. The *danchi* life was a Japanese version of the middle-class suburban dream that functioned as the backbone of the "free world" ideology in the Cold War context. However, the housewives' new modern life was tougher than advertised. The nuclear families they ran excluded help and support from elderly family members. Postwar gender politics sought a clear-cut separation of roles between men and women. While husbands devoted their entire energy to the workplace, wives were expected to take care of all household matters. Newly purchased home electronics helped ease their housework, but the nature of their role in everyday life did not change much. They still had to feed their family members from morning till evening and shop for food, and clothing, complete numerous errands and chores, and maintain the household. In many cases, they were urged to have a side job to earn extra money to buy those expensive appliances. New mothers had to take care of their babies with little help from other family members or neighbors. Moreover, the new responsibility of managing family finance and children's academic performance fell squarely on the wives' shoulder. The new middle-class communities they moved into did not offer intimate neighborly relationship. Trapped in the small apartment units, they felt claustrophobic in both the spatial and psychological sense. This circumstance provided a fertile ground for the growth of the fictional world that would enchant the women at home, at least for a time, every weekday. The scheduling of melodrama programs, which was intended to induce the housewives' habitual watching, invited the viewers to daydream for a short period. Looking at the stories that the melodramas offered, however, this genre did not provide a real site for criticism, questioning, and resisting the social and family

system even as escapism largely propelled the women to watch the shows in the first place. What was on the menu of the melodramas was very simple. They were different variations of adultery or “pure love” stories interspersed with close-up love scenes. Some critics found in those stories of adultery a moment of liberation from the conventional moral values and at least a fleeting sense of empowerment. Even in these stories of love affairs, however, the heroines were portrayed as victims of their circumstances rather than agents actively shaping their own destiny. After all, the daytime TV melodramas were themselves a part of the Cold War political and cultural dynamic that located women’s domestic role at the center of the principle of the social composition. These messages were brought home by a TV set that was one of the three “modern Imperial Regalia,” along with a refrigerator and a washing machine. For the housewives who did not have enough leisure time for social activities, the TV set was their best friend, and the daytime melodramas were an integral part of their TV watching experience. While watching those dramas, the housewife viewers were exposed to TV advertisements that also targeted female audiences. Detergent companies in particular were the main sponsors of the dramas, which fueled competition between Fuji TV and TBS over what was called a *shabondama sensō* (soap war).⁸⁰ The detergent advertisements also assumed that the viewers’ household owned a washing machine, another must-have item for Japanese middle-class. In this ecology of daytime television, the life of Japanese housewives were shaped and transformed.

⁸⁰ “Shinogi kezuru ‘hirumero’,” 5.

Conclusion

Media scholars have discussed how TV broadcasting in Japan, from its beginning in 1953, was shaped as a medium according to Cold War international policies of the United States in the Asia-Pacific area. As part of the plan to build a microwave communication network as an anti-communism bulwark from Japan to Australia, connecting islands and nations between the two countries, the early entry and subsequent development of television in Japan played an important role in protecting Japan from the encroachment of ideologies and values deemed communist. News sources made by the United States Information Service (USIS) were broadcast through Japanese TV newscast while U.S.-made entertainment features, such as serial dramas and sitcoms, were shown to Japanese TV viewers to propagate images of life in the “free world.”

While Japanese television was conceptualized and encouraged as a channel for U.S. Cold War propaganda to be delivered to Japanese living rooms, Japanese TV broadcasters eventually came to stand on their own feet in creating a unique TV culture. Although under much influence of the U.S. TV shows, Japanese stations developed a wide range of programs, including dramas that directly addressed issues of Japan’s place in the Cold War, “vulgar” audience participation shows that spurred discourses of emancipation, wide shows that envisioned equal communication with the viewers, and daytime melodramas that led female audiences to a fantasy world. Many of these TV contents were criticized as “vulgar” for being “unfit” to the building of postwar Japanese society. My study of the history of Japanese television started by asking why these TV programs were denounced as “vulgar” and harmful for the society, and how we can reexamine these past programs from a new perspective that highlights what kind of social and moral values those programs articulated. Through the discussions I laid out in the four chapters, I

argue that the “vulgar” TV programs, while considered largely as light entertainment, were an integral part of the postwar cultural discourses involving issues of democracy, international peace, role of mass media and gender disparity. It is true that “vulgar” elements in the programs in question—violence, obscenity, non-sense comedy, exorbitant cash prizes, and so on—attracted more audiences and contributed to the commercial benefit of the broadcasters. However, it is also the case that these programs attracted attention of commentators who sought to find alternative cultural values in those programs. In the crazy bodily movements encouraged by “vulgar” audience participation talent shows, they found an effort to stay true to the ordinary people’s emotional world and a spirit that went beyond the specific aims and intents of the broadcasters themselves. Wide shows were discussed in light of the equal communication between media and their audiences. Daytime melodramas led the commentators to think about female TV viewers and their life issues in postwar Japanese society.

These alternative views on the “vulgar” television send us back to the discussion of the Cold War culture. Although Japanese television was established as a social institution that was expected to articulate the interests of Cold War policies spearheaded by the United States, this new visual medium was much more uncontrollable and unpredictable than the Cold War visionaries initially thought. As Japanese TV culture penetrated the texture of people’s everyday life, TV programs’ engagement in the cultural discourse of the Cold War grew more complex and multi-layered. Some programs directly made a case against the U.S. Cold War security regime in East Asia, while other shows contributed to the creation of discourses that addressed concerns of the Cold War culture in Japan. The “defiant spirit” of the “vulgar” audience participation shows was translated into an alternative value that sought to resist the tyranny of the culture of conformity. The format of the wide shows that emphasized live relay news and “unmediated”

media messages was an expression of the feedback loop communication model that was considered to be a solution to the incessant centralization of power in capitalized societies. Daytime melodramas were also discussed in light of the Cold War regime of gender roles that placed housewives in the newly created family and social order.

In exploring the complex cultural discourses of the Cold War surrounding “vulgar” TV entertainment, we find, rather than a clear-cut division between the capitalist bloc and communism, or a struggle of freedom versus fascism, nuanced cultural logics and rhetoric that lead us to rethink the meaning of the cultural Cold War. As we discussed in the introduction, recent studies have put forward a framework through which the Cold War can be understood as a more complicated cultural process rather than a simple binary between two opposing political systems. Gleaning much from this recent literature that has complicated our understanding of this period, my study of early Japanese TV culture also examines different ways in which intellectuals, government officials, journalists and other social groups debated the cultural values of the Cold War through discussion of television. Such colorful discourses were made possible because of the nature of the new mass media which, through its programs, always created multiple and sometimes conflicting meanings, attracting diverse groups of viewers who projected their own opinions and desires onto and through it.

This dissertation concludes its analysis of the history of Japanese television in 1973, when the “oil shock” brought the high economic growth to an end. However, the “vulgar” TV programs controversy in Japan continues. Despite vociferous protests against “vulgar” television programming, few definite solutions for the problem have been offered. As we discussed in the first chapter, the governmental effort to revise the Broadcast Law so that the problematic TV problems could be checked by the state was frustrated in the mid-1960s by the broadcasters, who

believed that such legislative moves would concentrate state control of the media. MPT made another attempt to place TV programs under public supervision in October 1970 when the MPT minister Ide Ichitarō, mentioning the still unsettled “vulgar” program issues, announced his plan to create an official program monitoring institution in the following year. This plan also faced strong opposition from broadcasters and ultimately did not bear fruit. One month later, the Committee of the Posts and Telecommunications at the House of Representative launched a Special Committee for Broadcasting Matters (*Hōsō ni kansuru shōiinkai*) and started investigation of the “vulgar” programs and commercials. However, its interim report, written in May 1971, confirmed that the strengthening of the broadcasters’ self-regulation structure was the best way to cope with the “vulgar” TV problem.¹

Japanese government continued its effort to exert administrative control over TV broadcasting. In December 1985, the MPT minister Satō Megumu surprised TV broadcasters by issuing a guideline for the management of program deliberation councils, which had been run independently by each station. The details of this guideline included the number of the meetings a council should hold yearly, regular announcement of the names of the council members to the public, circulation of minutes or notes covering what was discussed, and reflection of the deliberation to the program production. In 1988, the Broadcast Law was finally revised, mandating that the program deliberation council system appoint members outside the station and release the substances of the program deliberation to the public.² However, in spite of these attempts to subject programs to deliberation in public, ultimately, the principle of the stations’

¹ Nihon hōsō kyōkai, *20-seiki hōsōshi-jō* (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2001), 545; Nihon Minkan Hōsō Renmei, *Minkan hōsō 50-nenshi* (Tokyo: Nihon Minkan Hōsō Renmei, 2001), 43.

² Nihon Minkan Hōsō Renmei, *Minkan hōsō 50-nenshi*, 190.

relative autonomy and self-regulation was reconfirmed.³

PTA groups' and educators' concern about television's evil influence on children also persisted. In 1997, there were serial murders of elementary school students from March to May in Kobe; allegedly, and the murder suspect was influenced by video games, comics, horror movies, and TV programs. In January 1998, a middle-school boy in Tochigi Prefecture stabbed his teacher to death. During the investigation of this murder, he confessed that he had found it cool when he watched a TV drama where an actor showed a skillful use of a butterfly knife, which led him to commit the stabbing. These shocking incidents rekindled the discussion on the influence of television on violent behaviors and juvenile delinquency. In March, the cabinet's Management and Coordination Agency (*Sōmuchō*) released a set of data regarding juvenile crimes that demonstrated an upsurge of juvenile felony cases. In May, MPT launched the Investigatory Committee for the Relation of Youth and Television (*Seishōnen to hōsō ni kansuru chōsa iinkai*) to investigate television's influence on youth development. In the same month, the Committee of the Posts and Telecommunications in the House of Representatives unprecedentedly invited presidents of the TV stations in Tokyo and held a hearing on several issues regarding television viewing among children and adolescents. In December, the MPT's investigatory committee issued a final report, suggesting the establishment of a third-party organization to cope with the potentially harmful impact of television on the youth. This later materialized as the Special Committee for Broadcasting and Youth (*Hōsō to seishōnen ni kansuru iinkai*), established in April 2000, within the Broadcasting Program Improvement

³ The mandatory report of the program deliberation to the public did little to rectify "vulgarization." An Asahi Newspaper article describes how broadcasters were reluctant to put this new clause into practice. According to this article, the first such report of TBS, TV Tokyo and FM Tokyo was conducted in the form of a very short one-minute announcement during broadcasting and was very superficial, with no real discussion of program issues. "Hōsōhō 'kaisei' wo megutte (media insaido)," *Asahi shinbun*, November 11, 1988, 17.

Committee (BPIC). This special committee sought to become a mediator between broadcasters and TV audiences in dealing with TV programs' possible harmful effects. Accepting audiences' opinions about TV programs, the committee members would examine the programs in question and issue advice to the broadcasters, who in turn would seriously consider the report and put it into action. All of these communications would be released to the public.⁴ This advising process that the special committee would perform was very similar to the responsibilities of the BPIC when it was established in 1965. That a special committee was founded within the BPIC to perform the duties that its parent organization was already supposed to be doing tells us that the BPIC had not been very efficient in raising awareness of the "vulgar" TV problems.

The first task of the special committee was to hear audiences' opinions about the current state of variety shows. The committee investigated two shows, Fuji TV's *Mechamecha iketerut!* (What a Cool We Are!) and TV Asahi's *Onepu!* and issued a final report in November 2000. The report pointed out that the "*Shiritori zamurai*" (Word Chain Warriors) game in *Mechamecha iketerut!* featured a mob-beating as a penalty of the game, which might send a wrong message of justifying group violence and bullying to children. With *Onepu!*, the report stated that the "Nepunage" segment in which the host threw the female guests over with his feet and flashed their panties would incite voyeurism. In response to this report, both Fuji TV and TV Asahi made a decision to stop those segments. In the meantime, the viewers' opinions varied regarding the report. Many of the opinions sent to the special committees opposed the report's vision of the programs in question and complained that the report had been written from an extremely conservative perspective.⁵

⁴ Nihon Minkan Hōsō Renmei, *Minkan hōsō 50-nenshi*, 401-405; Oda Sadao, *Hōsō no 20-seiki: rajio kara terebi, soshite ta-media e* (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2002), 351-353.

⁵ Nihon Minkan Hōsō Renmei, *Minkan hōsō 50-nenshi*, 406-407.

With no industry-wide systematic broadcast criteria on obscenity, violence and language in place, the degree of explicitness of expressions in those categories were largely determined by each station's and each producer's self-censorship. Under these circumstances, Japanese TV broadcasters had been producing many shows that raised the viewers' brows. Today, Japanese television is known for its entertainment shows with scandalous scenes, having celebrity guests separate a piece of shoe-like-cake from a real shoe with their mouths, or showing a middle-aged man crossing a bridge made of young women in bikinis.⁶ The U.S. viewers would wonder how such programs are possible in Japan. As we examined in the introduction, the broadcasting institutions in Japan were built during the occupation period in such a way as to give broadcasters a great deal of discretion as to programming matters. Throughout the long history of television and the discourse around its social responsibility, and especially with all the governmental attempts to revise the Broadcast Law to create an official censorship organization, this basic structure persisted up to this day. All TV broadcasters, with varying degrees of consideration of public opinion, enjoy such "freedom of expression."

While this "vulgar" programs discussion continued to draw the attention of parents, educators, government officials and intellectuals, it also left a lasting impact on TV broadcasting. While most broadcasters followed the "ratings-first" approach at the expense of program quality, some seriously considered the production of "non-vulgar" programs. For example, an NHK producer, Yoshida Naoya, known for having produced the highly acclaimed *Nihon no sugao* documentary series and popular NHK *taiga dorama* (historical fiction TV drama) *Taikōki* and *Minamoto no Yoshitsune*, actually took motivation from Ōya Sōichi's "a nation of a 100 million

⁶ Amanda Scherker, "You Have To See These Japanese Game Shows To Believe Them. But Even Then You Won't," *Huffington Post*, January 25, 2014, accessed May 25, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/10/japanese-game-shows_n_4569474.html.

idiots” criticism. He said in an interview, “I worked in the broadcasting for thirty-seven years, but what spurred me was my opposition to Mr. Ōya’s ‘a nation of a 100 million idiots’ statement. I felt that he said those fancy words by taking television in a superficial manner without seriously imagining the role of television. I thought to myself, ‘we’ll see how high-quality things can be discussed through television.’”⁷

Tsuzuku Tadahiko, NTV producer of the “Kyosen kangaeru” segment in *IIPM* that we discussed in the third chapter, thought of taking this socially conscious wide show one step further by producing a jumbo-sized charity show that could integrate the entire nation of Japan on the basis of addressing various social causes. The show *Nijū yojikan terebi: ai wa chikyū wo sukuu* (24-Hour Television, “Love Saves the Earth”), a daylong marathon charity that began on August 26, 1978, and has been broadcast yearly to the present, was created by Tsuzuku, eager to “reverse the social trend which simply states that ‘television is vulgar and far from culture.’” His plan of making a charity show that would contribute to society and international peace stemmed from his response to the “vulgar” TV discourse. He wanted to show that television was a powerful media that could do much more than what anti-TV critics anticipated. Once every year, some of the most popular celebrities have hosted this show, which consists of a variety of different programs including a live charity show, drama, animation, documentary and comedy, all of which geared toward raising awareness of domestic and international charity issues. Indeed, as was the intention of the producer, this show is an expansion of the wide show structure with its variety in programming and content that deals with social issues. Just as wide shows demonstrated what original programming that took full advantage of television as a medium might look like, *Nijū yojikan terebi* showed how influential a TV show could be in contributing

⁷ Yomiuri Shinbunsha Geinōbu, *Terebi bangumi no 40-nen* (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 1994), 19.

to society at large.⁸

Another legacy of the programs I discussed in this dissertation is the unique Japanese idol culture. Multi-talented young TV stars, commonly known as “idols” (*aidoru*), now dominate whole aspects of Japanese popular cultural scenes from music and films to TV dramas and variety shows. These TV personalities are often associated with their “girls/boys next door” images created by their producers for marketing purposes. These friendly images allow fans to easily identify themselves with these stars.⁹

It was in the early 1970s that this unique idol culture came into its own in Japan. In this early history of idols, talent scout shows on television played an important role; NTV’s *Suta tanjō!* (Star is born!) was an early example of the shows that built the foundation for idol culture. Started in 1971, this show brought to attention several female and male idol singers who would become top stars in the next decade.¹⁰

Like other amateur talent shows we discussed in the second chapter, this show auditioned “pure amateurs” who had had no experience as professional singers. While watching the “girls and boys next door” become national stars, a great number of middle-school and high-school kids dreamed about doing the same and applied for local auditions. Applicants, most of them teenagers, were required to pass the local audition to hit the main show stage in Tokyo. If they were successful at the main stage, the program would train these young talents to the professional level by offering a variety of lessons including music and singing. The final stage

⁸ Ibid., 397-402.

⁹ For the discussion of Japanese idol culture, see Hiroshi Aoyagi, “Pop Idols and the Asian Identity,” in *Japan Pop!: inside the world of Japanese Popular Culture*, ed. Timothy J. Craig (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2000); Hiroshi Aoyagi, *Islands of Eight Million Smiles: Idol Performance and Symbolic Production in Contemporary Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005); Patrick W. Galbraith and Jason G. Karlin ed., *Idols and Celebrity in Japanese Media Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)

¹⁰ For a detailed description of *Suta tanjō!*, see Yomiuri Shinbunsha Geinōbu, *Terebi bangumi no 40-nen*, 355-360; Shiga Nobuo, *Terebi bangumi kotohajime: sōseiki no terebi bangumi 25-nenshi* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2008), 528-535.

involved a “rookie draft” conducted by recording companies and star production companies.

In order to participate in the step-by-step training process and become a national star candidate, the applicants must be “amateurs” with no experience of show business. The potential talent would be discovered and developed by the program. Therefore, every youngster interested in music and singing was welcome to participate. For the first year of the program, the number of the overall applicants to the local auditions was estimated to have been hundreds of thousands.¹¹ This openness of the broadcasting stage reminds us of the amateur-centered approach to the “healthy entertainment” ideology found in shows like *Nodo jiman*. However, unlike *Nodo jiman*, *Suta tanjō!* actually sought to raise its participants to professionals. In order to be a part of the professionalization process, the participating teenagers were expected to be “good girls and boys.” A successful singer at the local audition must obtain approval from the school and parents in order to perform at the main stage.¹² If the performers passed the main round with a high score, they would move to the training process in which they were expected to learn whatever it took to become a national star. The main attraction of this show was to watch and root for the girls and boys undergoing this step-by-step training process to become a full-fledged singer. During this process, the candidates’ hard work and perseverance a major point of emphasis.¹³ This focus on the disciplinary process by which amateurs were expected to learn the rules of show business that would lead them to the career success brings us back to the tradition that *Nodo jiman* and other early amateur talent shows had set. As we have discussed in the second chapter, these shows required amateurs to perform the way the broadcasters wanted. This dissertation stops short of analyzing how these early ideals of TV audience participation entertainment shows

¹¹ Shiga, *Terebi bangumi kotohajime*, 535.

¹² *Ibid.*, 530.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 533.

influenced the way Japanese idol culture developed. However, a further study on this subject will bring to light how the Cold War cultural dynamic of discipline and resistance, articulated in the audience participation programs, conditioned subsequent Japanese youth culture, especially its emphasis on narratives of openness, freedom and edification.

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