

Japan's Transcultural Media: Crossing Borders in the Modern Era
Prof. D.P. Martinez
SOAS-University of London

1. Japan's Transcultural Media - crossing borders in the modern era

For many of the post-war generation, their first encounter with Japanese media was through *Gozilla* films and *Astro Boy* on television (1960s); samurai films (*jidai-geki*, 1970s); children's television (1980s), and then the explosion of anime, manga, novels, and films that began in the 1990s. However, Japan was one of the first nation-states to make documentary films, movies and use newsreels to keep their citizens informed, while also watching Hollywood and European cinema. Post-war, the television became ubiquitous in households. This lecture will try and make sense of how Japanese media consumption and production has long been transnational while also supporting state ideology.

Key Readings:

Davis, Darrell William (1996) 'Moving Pictures of Japaneseness' in his *Picturing Japaneseness*. New York: University of Columbia Press.

Silverberg, Miriam (2007) Part 2, chapter 3: 'Friends of the Movies' in her *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*. Berkeley: California.

For Future Reading:

Japan as empire and film as essentially transnational: key example Ozu's 1930s gangster trilogy

Readings:

Baskett, Michael (2008) *The Attractive Empire: Transnational Film Culture in Imperial Japan*. University of Hawai'i Press.

High, Peter (2003) *The Imperial Screen*. University of Wisconsin Press.

Iwaguchi, Koichi (2007) 'Cultures of Empire: Transnational Media Flows and Cultural (dis)connections in East Asia', in Paula Chakravarty and Yuezhi Zhao (eds.) *Global Communications: Toward a Transcultural Political Economy*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Miyao, Daisuke (2007) *Sessue Hayakawa: Silent Cinema and Transnational Stardom*. Duke University Press.

Richie, Donald (2001 and 2005) 'Beginnings and the Benshi' and 'Taisho Democracy and *Shochiku*' in his *One Hundred Years of Japanese Film*. Tokyo: Kodansha International.

Santos, Antonio (2005) *Yasujiro Ozu*. Madrid: Catédra.

Silverberg, Miriam (2007) Part 1: 'Japanese Modern Times' Part 2, chapter 3: 'Friends of the Movies' in her *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*. Berkeley: California.

Standish, Isolde (2006) 'Introduction: Towards a Politics of Cinema' and 'Cinema, Nationalism and Empire' in her *A New History of Japanese Cinema*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, Ltd.

Tipton, Elise K. and John Clark, eds. (2000) *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s*. Sydney: Australian Humanities Research Foundation.

2. The post-war 'discovery' of a national style: key example Kurosawa's modern (*gendai* 現代劇) films versus the foreign admiration for his samurai (*jidai geki* 時代劇) films and how Ozu was raised to iconic Japanese status.

In this lecture we consider how Japanese film came to be seen as art house film in the global film festival circuit. Beginning with the success of Kurosawa's *Rashomon* at the Venice Film Festival in 1951, we consider how a certain image of Japan and expectations about Japanese cinema grew

up in the 1950s-80a. From the Japanese side an interesting discourse occurred: success in the international arena for Kurosawa led to discussions of his being 'not being Japanese enough'. What is at stake when in the concept of a 'national' cinema?

Key Readings:

- Choi, Jinhee (2006) 'National Cinema: the Very Idea!', in Noël Carroll and Jinhee Choi (eds) *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Miyao, Daisuke (2014) 'The Cinema and the Sword: Inventing Patterns of Japanese Culture', in Alan Chong and Noriko Murai (eds) *Inventing Asia: American Perceptions and Influences around 1900*. Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

For Future Reading:

- Bordwell, David (1988) *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*. Princeton: University of Princeton press.
- Burch, Noël (1979) Chapters on Ozu and Kurosawa in his *To the Distant Observer*. University of California Press.
- Goodwin, James (1993) *Akira Kurosawa and Intertextual Cinema*. John Hopkins University Press.
- Martinez, Dolores P. (2015) 'Kurosawa's Noir Quartet' in Chi-Yun Shin and Mark Gallagher (eds) *East Asian Film Noir*. London: I.B. Taurus.
- Nolletti, Arthur, Jr. 'Ozu's *Tokyo Story* and the "Recasting" of McCarey's *Make Way for Tomorrow*' in David Desser (ed.) *Ozu's Tokyo Story*. Cambridge: CUP. ALL OTHER CHAPTERS IN THIS BOOK ARE INTERESTING.
- Prince, Stephen (1991) 'Viewing Kurosawa' and 'The Legacy' in his *The Warrior's Camera*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Richie, Donald (1999, 3rd ed.) *The films of Akira Kurosawa*. University of California Press.
- Schrader, Paul (1972) Ozu chapter in his *Transcendental Style in Film*. University of California.
- Yoshimoto, Mitsuhiro (2000) Part 1: 'Japanese Cinema in Search of a Discipline' and 'Kurosawa Criticism and the Name of the Author' in his *Kurosawa*. Duke University Press.

3. Gendered representations in post-war Japan: key example female protagonists in cinema

In many ways the Japanese attitude towards women seems contradictory: good wives and wise mothers via for media attention with teenaged Lolitas, while vengeful female ghosts seem to haunt the Japanese (and foreign) male. Concurrently, women, particularly young women, are important consumers of Japan's mass media. What can we learn about gender in Japan from the representations of women and men in its mass media?

Key Readings:

- Martinez, Dolores P. (2007) 'Seven Samurai and Six Women: Kurosawa Akira's *Seven Samurai* (1954)' in Alistair Philips and Julian Stringer (eds) *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Robertson, Jennifer (1992) 'Doing and Undoing "Female" and "Male" in Japan: The Takarazuka Revue' in Takie Sugiyama Lebra (ed.) *Japanese Social Organization*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

For Future Reading:

- Barrett, Gregory (1989) 'Vengeful Spirit' and 'All-Suffering Female and Weak Passive Male' in his *Archetypes in Japanese Film*. London: Associated University Presses.
- Hauser, William (1991) 'Women and the War: Japanese Film Image' in Gail Bernstein (ed.) *Recreating Japanese Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Iwamura, Rosemary (1994) 'Letter from Japan: From Girls Who Dress up Like Boys to Trussed-up Porn Stars - Some of the Contemporary Heroines on the Japanese Screen', *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* vol. 7(2): Miscellany.
- Kinsella, Sharon (1998) 'Japanese Subculture in the 1990s: *Otaku* and the Amateur *Manga* Movement', *the Journal of Japanese Studies* vol. 24(2): 289-316.
- Miller, Laura (2008) 'Those Naughty Teenage Girls: Japanese Kogals, Slang, and Media Assessments' in *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* vol. 14(2): 225-247.
- Napier, Susan (1998) 'Vampires, Psychic Girls, Flying Women and Sailor Scouts: Four Faces of the Young Female in Japanese Popular Culture' in D. P. Martinez (ed.) *The Worlds of Japanese Popular Culture*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Painter, Andrew (1996) 'The Telepresentation of Gender in Japan' in Anne Imamura (ed.) *Re-imagining Japanese women*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Rosenberger, Nancy R. (1996) 'Fragile Resistance, Signs of Status: Women between the State and Media in Japan' in Anne Imamura (ed.) *Re-imagining Japanese women*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Russell, Catherine 'Women's Stories in Post-War Japan: Naruse Mikio's *Late Chrysanthemums* (1954)' in Alistair Philips and Julian Stringer (eds) *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Sato, Tadao (2008) 'A Difficult Woman' in his *Kenji Mizoguchi and the Art of Japanese Cinema*. Oxford: Berg.

4. The western engagement with 'cool' Japan: yakuza, ghosts, anime and even more samurai

The concept of Cool Japan was part of its foreign policy as promulgated from the turn of the century – a form of nation branding. This occurred on the crest of the wave of a new Western engagement with Japanese media – particularly with J-Horror and the films of Takeshi Kitano. As Napier puts it, this is the era when Japan exists both as fantasy and its media has created a large fan cult in the West. What can we say about these transcultural movements of images and even products in the post-modern era? How useful are they in creating an understanding of Japanese society?

Key Readings:

- Condry, Ian (2009) 'Anime Creativity: Characters and Premises in the Quest for Cool Japan'. *Theory, Culture & Society* vol. 26(2-3): 139-163.
- Napier, Susan (2007) 'From Fans to Fandom' in her *From Impressionism to Anime: Japan as Fantasy and Fan Cult in the Mind of the West*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

For Future Reading:

- Allison, Ann (2006) 'Millennial Japan: Intimate Alienation and New Age Intimacies' in her *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Anon (2009) 'It came from the East... Japanese Horror Cinema in the Age of Globalization'. *Gnovis, A Journal of Communication, Culture and Technology*, <http://www.gnovisjournal.org/2009/05/13/it-came-east-japanese-horror-cinema-age-globalization/>
- Chun, Jayson (2011) 'Learning Bushidō from Abroad: Japanese Reactions to *The Last Samurai*'. *International Journal of Asia Pacific Studies* vol. 7(3) Special Issue: 19-34.
- Daliot-Bul, Michal (2009) 'Japan Brand Strategy: The Taming of 'Cool Japan' and the Challenges of Cultural Planning in a Postmodern Age'. *Social Science Japan Journal* vol. 12(2): 247-266.

- Frese, Sophia 'Cool Revenge: Kill Bill and the Female Assassin' in Ulla Haselstein et al. (eds) *The Cultural Career of Coolness*. Plymouth: Lexington Books.
- Karatsu, Rie (2006) 'Between Comedy and Kitsch: Kitano's *Zatoichi* and Kurosawa's Traditions of "Jidaigeki" Comedies. *Scope: An Online Journal of Film and TV Studies*. <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/scope/documents/2006/october-2006/karatsu.pdf>
- McLeod, Ken (2013) 'Afro-Samurai: Techno-Orientalism and Contemporary Hip Hop'. *Popular Music* vol. 30(2): 259-275.
- Napier, Susan (2007) 'In Search of Sacred Space? Anime Fandom and the Miyazaki World' in her *From Impressionism to Anime: Japan as Fantasy and Fan Cult in the Mind of the West*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Tsutsui, William (2006) *In Godzilla's Footsteps: Japanese Pop Culture Icons on the Global Stage*. All and any of the chapters. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.