

Articles

Aesthetics Underlies Technical Examinations

by Fuminori Akiba

Technical examinations of paintings, for example, of Ogata Korin's *Folding Screen with Red and White Plums*, has evoked a heated debate among art historians. However, there is no inquiry considering the aesthetics underlying these technical examinations. This is so strange, because technical examinations, which emphasize material aspects of artworks and authors' productive processes, inevitably come into conflict with contemporary aesthetics in Japan. As we well know, from the notion of intentional experience in phenomenological aesthetics, contemporary Japanese aesthetics does not regard artworks as mere material objects, and it put large emphasis to viewers' experience and actualization of artworks. Therefore, we must suppose that technical examinations presuppose a completely different type of aesthetics from contemporary aesthetics in Japan. The aim of this paper is to make clear the aesthetics underlying technical examinations. My hypothesis is that two kinds of "scientific" aesthetics, currently ignored by Japanese contemporary philosophers and art critics, might support technical examinations. The first is aesthetics influenced by the philosophy of science (Currie 1989), emphasizing the process of art-making and authorial intention, and regarding it as similar to the theory-making process by scientists. I call this "author's aesthetics." The second approach is aesthetics influenced by the philosophy of information and evolutionary theories (Nussbaum 2004), emphasizing proper functions of artworks that allow them to survive. I call this process "functional aesthetics," which principally leaves authorial intention out of consideration and emphasizes the process of propagation of artworks. However, this also supports technical examinations, because it identifies material environments which make it possible to reproduce the proper function of artworks. In addition I suggest that there might be a third aesthetics which underlies technical examinations; the aesthetics of realistic painting.

The Possibilities and Limitations of Amateur Ethnography: Hijikata's Ryuboku and Someki's The Cultural Climate and Folkcraft of Micronesia

by Satoshi Okada

The aim of this paper is to examine the work of two Japanese amateur ethnographers who were enthralled by Micronesia (then known as "Nan'yo" or the South Sea

Islands.) I will look at the work of Hijikata Hisakatsu(1900-1977) and Someki Atsushi(1900-1988) in order to see to which extent they were complicit with or critical of Japanese colonialism. Professionally, Hijikata and Someki were both artists. In terms of ethnography, they chose to remain “amateurs,” because they were suspicious of the ethnographic professionalism that was institutionalized by the ideologies of Imperial Japan. It must also be stated that both Hijikata and Someki were, at least in part, complicit with colonial ideologies. Yet their commitment to “amateurism” afforded them a certain freedom to be critical of colonial ethnography. They shared an ardent desire for the “romantic” South Sea Islands and an admiration for Paul Gauguin. Hijikata spent 14 years of his life, from 1929 to 1942, in Micronesia while it was under Japanese occupation, and Someki traveled all over Micronesia for 6 months in 1934. Both of them published their ethnographical writings later in their lives.

This paper argues that their “amateur” status both empowered them, by offering them new possibilities unavailable to professionals, and at the same time constituted a limitation. Although there are several studies on the ethnographical works on Micronesia by Hijikata and Someki, little is known about their amateurism. Certainly, there are similarities between these two amateurs, but there were also specific differences, particularly when they faced up to the tragic reality of Micronesia under colonial rule. In this paper, I would like to focus on ambiguity in the amateurism of Hijikata and Someki’s ethnographical works, and explore what is the most important distinction between them.

The Reception and Modification of Censored Work: *Fuseji* in the Case of *Ryōrimura Kaikyōroku* by Kataoka Teppei

by Yoshiyuki Maki

This paper is focused on Japanese censorship before and during World War II, and more specifically discusses modifications in the text of Kataoka Teppei’s *Ryōrimura Kaikyōroku* (Kaizō, February 1929). This novel includes the words that were printed with expunged typesetting mold and the words which were replaced by typesetting characters, known as *fuseji*. *Fuseji* was a cover to protect the publication from the control on expression in Japan before and during World War II. Despite those restrictions on expression publishers used special strategies to enable the readers to read these *fuseji* parts in the text. On the other hand, there was also an active attitude on the readers’ part to try to read the text through the version which was supplied by *fuseji*. The first publication of *Ryōrimura Kaikyōroku* included expunged typesetting molds mostly in the second half of the novel. Later, the expunged parts were indicated by *fuseji* or typesetting characters in the published book. This paper discusses the analyses of primary source materials to confirm the abovementioned reading action by readers. In conclusion, according to the difference of comprehension of the text by readers, it was pointed out that *fuseji* has an aspect as a cultural semiotic.

Film in Japanese Language Education during the 1950s

by Kumiko Mizobuchi

During the 1950s, Japanese Language Education in junior and senior high schools often included film-related topics. Even though this is an interesting phenomenon that calls for careful analysis, there has been no research into this topic in Japanese Film History up to now. The purpose of this paper is to show that this topic is important in Japanese Film History as well as a broader historical context.

In Film Education that started in 1951, essays of film critics such as Iijima Tadashi, Tsumura Hideo, Imamura Tahei and Kitagawa Fuyuhiko were used. Narrative films and their screenplays were also used as course materials. Unlike science education films, this material was not specially created for educational purposes; these filmic and non-filmic texts were chosen and edited to adapt to the aims of Japanese Language Education. The aims of Japanese Education were twofold: the moral education as a citizen who can take part in the post-war democratic society, and the fostering of communication ability. In the context of moral education, films were regarded as a kind of art form useful for life, and emphasis was placed on the 'ideal' appreciation of films showing a suitable sensitivity based on the proper understanding of the characteristics of film as a medium. In the context of the fostering of communication skills, attention was paid not only to the visual aspects such as acting and expression, but also to the auditory aspects such as the spoken lines including their accents and tones. Cinema also played a role in proliferating standard Japanese to students all over Japan.

Hearing 'Embodied Voices' on the Radio: How Saisei Murou's *Anzukko* Sheds Light on the Problem of the Virtually Embodied Voice

by Masahiro Hirose

Generally we recognize that it is impossible to listen to someone's actual, embodied voice through the medium of radio. We accept the disembodied voices coming from our radio because the reality of electric media is very much a part of everyday life. Nevertheless Heishiro, a character in the novel *Anzukko* by Saisei Murou, believes that the voice he has heard on the radio is somehow real. One could simply conclude that he is mistaken about the voice. But, from a different perspective, his apparent misunderstanding could help to shine light on the problem of the virtually embodied voice. With electrical communication media, the speaker and listener both tend to feel their actual bodies are dissociated from their voices, and perceive instead a kind of virtual body in front of them. This idea provides an explanation of how Heishiro heard an 'embodied voice' on the radio. This paper looks at the potentiality of the virtual body generated by electrical communication media. It focuses on the fact that

the voice Heishiro heard on the radio belonged to a female announcer, and considers the specific features of the sexuality existing in the virtual body generated by electrical communication media.

Rethinking *Forest of Oppression*: Body, Speech and Realism in Japanese Documentary Films of the Late 1960s

by Ayumi Hata

This paper will examine how Japanese committed documentary films of the late 1960s were particularly associated with the realism shared in the contemporary society of their time, due to their representation of individual bodies and spontaneous speech. I will especially focus on the student strike documentary *Forest of Oppression*, filmed by Ogawa Shinsuke and his crew in 1967.

Intensive agitation against the revision of the 1951 U.S.-Japan Security Treaty (known as the 1960 Anpo tōsō) marked the height of the postwar leftist movement in Japan, mobilizing not only activist-students but also a large number of workers and city dwellers of all ages. The collective move towards repenting the past, and thereby of wishing to become active agents of history, also influenced the younger generation to go on a quest for an existential ‘self’ with autonomous individual subjectivity. New Left student-militants were in the thick of a struggle, not only against the policies of the current government or the authoritarianism which permeated the entire society, but also against a persistent anxiety about their equivocal selves due to the socio-political upheaval of the time and the rapid infiltration of a high-consumption culture into their everyday lives.

Taking into consideration this historical context, I will show how *Forest of Oppression* caught moments that induced its viewers to understand the stagnant, problematic reality of postwar subjectivity through the use of an ensemble of close-up shots of bodies accompanied by quasi-synched speech. In fact, the contrast between unanchored words and solid-textured physical images reveals the fundamental inappropriateness of the impractical Marxist slogans the students repeated, and hence, evokes much speculation about how those students’ insecure inner lives contrasted with their passionate words. While the historical significance of Ogawa Productions has been chiefly discussed in terms of their radical methodology, including their independent filmmaking-screening practice and their policy of shooting one subject over a long period of time, I will argue that Ogawa’s early film precisely presented the symptoms of contemporary social problems and the intricate realities of people’s lived experiences through formal experimentation.

Metaphor and Discrimination: The *Buto* of Tatsumi Hijikata and its Critics

by Hirofumi Mizukawa

This essay discusses the relationship between the representation of the Tohoku region and the body in Tatsumi Hijikata's *buto* dance. Tohoku is an important theme in Hijikata's work. However, one can't simply consider Tohoku in the context of a geographical region, since in Hijikata's dance its representation is always connected to the representation of the body. This paper tackles this problem by examining it not from the point of view of the dances themselves, but by concentrating on critical essays on Hijikata's work. I conclude that Hijikata's evocation of Tohoku was based on the perceived exoticism of the region and on discrimination against the physically handicapped. Finally I point out that this expression actually had some commonality with the manifestoes of the disability movement occurring in the same period.

The Blind Spot of Sodomy: Problematizing the Expression of Homosexuality in the Japanese Historical Novel

by Kenichiro Yamada

Studies into sexuality have dramatically developed in Japan since 1980s. In the field of literature, too, scholars have made remarkable advances in mapping sexuality. However, the situation is different in the area of historical novels in Japan. Historical novels are very popular in Japan and are established as a major genre, yet research has mostly been into whether the story is based on facts or not. Researchers don't often look into the symbols in the work. Consequently various aspects of sexuality in historical novels have not been elucidated. The connection between historical novels and sexuality has been overlooked.

In this study I will focus on sexuality in historical novels, and try to find a new evaluation axis in the studies on historical novels. Given this perspective, homosexuality and particularly sodomy seems to be an important breach. Sodomy has had a long history in Japan. It was not regarded as abnormal. In recent times, especially, sodomy was conflated with the *samurai*, or feudal warriors' moral values and view of life – the so-called *bushido* chivalry. This historical background naturally relates to historical novels. In fact, there are a number of historical works taking up the connection between *bushido* and sodomy. Therefore sodomy in historical novels becomes an excellent evaluation criterion when dealing with sexuality in historical novels.

In the present study I chose two eminent historical novelists, Shiba Ryotaro and Ikenami Shotaro. I expect that the study of sexuality in historical novels will become a new evaluation axis in the category of historical novels in Japan.