

Japan's Post-1968: *Kikan firumu*, *Shinema 69*, and *Eiga hihyō*

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INTRODUCTION: JAPAN IN AND AFTER 1968

As in France and many other countries, Japan's 1968 was a year of political protests and social upheavals. Its main protagonists were college students who began occupying their classrooms and streets to protest oppression brought by US imperialism, the Japanese capitalist state, the "Old Left," and the Communist Party. With the help of these New Left radicals, even farmers, too, rose up to fight the construction of the newly planned Narita International Airport. Not surprisingly, this highly intense political situation led to a riot. On October 21, more than two thousand student protesters equipped with their iconic helmets and wooden *gewalt* sticks burned down the Shinjuku Station, the busiest train station in the Tokyo area, in an attempt to stop the transportation of jet fuel used for the ongoing US invasion of Vietnam. It is, however, misleading to treat the year 1968 as the single apex of the Japanese anti-establishment movement. From 1969 to 1970, local protests continued against the automatic renewal of the US-Japan Security Treaty, which was just about to happen at the end of 1970. Then, the real end point of Japan's long 1960s finally occurred in February 1972, when members of the far-left political faction United Red Army (Rengō sekigun, hereafter URA) were arrested after the Asama-Sansō incident, a spectacular, live-broadcast, nine-day-long shootout between URA members and the special police.

At the same time, the 1960s, especially the second half of the decade, were a turbulent period for the Japanese film industry. In 1958, there were 7,067 movie theaters in Japan, which sold 11.2 million tickets in total (this means every single Japanese citizen watched more than twelve films on average per year). In 1968,

these numbers had rapidly declined to 3,814 theaters and to 3.1 million tickets sold.¹ This was due largely to the rise of the domestic TV industry, but thanks to the country's "high-speed" economic growth after World War II, Japanese people in general also became affluent enough to adopt other new forms of leisure activities such as playing golf for the adults and go-go dancing for the youth. Despite this unavoidable crisis, Japanese cinema remained productive in the late 1960s, releasing as many films—410 in 1967 and 494 in both 1968 and 1969—as in the 1950s.² But this perceived constancy was actually the product of the ongoing restructuring of the film industry, since a significant number of Japanese films of the period were now produced independently by such enterprising directors as Ōshima Nagisa, Wakamatsu Kōji, and Ogawa Shinsuke. In contrast, the five major Japanese film studios—Shōchiku, Tōhō, Daiei, Tōei, and Nikkatsu—could do little more than conserve their remaining properties. In particular, the situation hit Daiei and Nikkatsu much harder than others because they did not have their own theater chains. To secure their uncertain revenues, these two companies formed a new distribution company called Dainichi eihai as a joint venture, but it was only a drop in the bucket. Consequently, Daiei went bankrupt in 1971, while Nikkatsu managed to sustain its business by dedicating the company entirely to the production of softcore porn films.

Given such a radical restructuring of society and the industry, it comes as no surprise that Japan in the second half of the 1960s witnessed the emergence of a new critical discourse on film and its shifting functions. This chapter offers a comparative reading of the three independent Japanese film magazines published in and after 1968: *Kikan firumu* (*Film Quarterly*, 1968–72), *Shinema 69* (*Cinema 69*, 1969–71, which changed its title yearly as in *Shinema 70* and *71*), and *Eiga hihyō* (*Film Criticism*, 1970–73). Despite their short-lived existence, these magazines clearly demonstrate Japan's active participation in the ongoing global debates about how to revolutionize daily engagement with film and other mass communication media. Their informed focus on issues such as expanded cinema and video art (*Kikan firumu*), revised auteur theory and French poststructuralism (*Shinema 69*), and far-left radicalism and the liberation of the Third World (*Eiga hihyō*) quite convincingly testified to the emergence of a new global network that no longer based itself on the simple geopolitical divide between the West and the rest. Of many topics discussed there, this chapter pays special attention to the manner in which Japanese film critics' diligent search for alternative cinema ultimately led to a radical reconfiguration of film theory as such.

THREE MAGAZINES

Having appeared as the Japanese version of "post-1968" counter-discourse, *Kikan firumu*, *Shinema 69*, and *Eiga hihyō* all intended to establish a new form

and meaning of “criticism” (*hihyō*) in the context of Japanese film criticism. As Hatano Tetsurō, the founder of *Shinema 69*, reminds us, the history of Japanese film criticism up to the late 1960s had been divided into two major tendencies, namely “impressionist criticism” (*inshō hihyō*) and “ideological criticism” (*ideorogii hihyō*).³ While the former had long been a template for Japanese film criticism, frequently adopted by professional critics writing for *Kinema junpō* and other major commercial magazines, the latter also became very influential after the war, along with the legalization of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and its organizational support for “Old Left” filmmakers such as Imai Tadashi and Yamamoto Satsuo. But these two approaches were problematic because they seldom questioned the legitimacy of their own claims, as if they had some unflinching, well-nigh transcendental trust in their aesthetic sensibilities or political credos.

As a remedy for this long-standing problem, Hatano and editors of the other two magazines consciously adopted several strategies. First, they proactively solicited contributions from those who had not been contaminated with preexisting conventions of Japanese film criticism. Indeed, writers appearing in these magazines were mostly in their twenties and thirties and came from such diverse disciplines and backgrounds as art, literature, theater, music, TV, graphic design, guerrilla tactics, and computer science. Second, the editors also designed their magazines to be a site for direct and reciprocal communication. Besides asking the readers to submit their own film reviews and essays, they frequently organized workshop series, study groups, and film exhibitions in an effort to revitalize film criticism as a social practice. Third, because the editors were highly concerned with copious, profit-oriented restrictions imposed by print capitalism, they all decided to go independent by establishing their own publishing house and adopting the format of independent or coterie (*dōjin*) magazine. Though such a decision ultimately made these magazines financially unstable and short lived, it clearly testifies to their shared incentive to restructure Japanese film criticism from scratch, even by altering its very capitalist mode of production and distribution.⁴

The oldest of the three, *Kikan firumu* came out at first, in October 1968, as an organ of the Sōgestu Art Center. Originally founded in 1959 with family money by the film director Teshigahara Hiroshi (best known for *Woman in the Dunes*, 1964), this institution had already played a very important role in supporting burgeoning Japanese avant-garde art movements. It thus comes as no surprise that the magazine’s main objective was to develop its own concept of “alternative cinema” (*mou hitotsu no eiga*) in collaboration with experimental filmmakers and video artists.⁵ Thanks to very detailed reports provided by the New York-based filmmaker Iimura Takahiko and other foreign correspondents, the magazine was first of all very resourceful and cutting-edge in introducing some notable media experiments happening on the other side of the Pacific, including Jonas Mekas’s Film-Maker’s Cooperative, Stan VanDerBeek’s expanded cinema, and Arthur Ginsberg’s Video Free America.⁶

But the real contribution of *Kikan firumu* lies rather in its strong will to theorize this radical transformation of what people used to call “film” into something else, something that is more complicated and self-reflexive than a mere vehicle for storytelling. The magazine addressed this issue from a transnational perspective, frequently translating both interviews and theoretical essays retrieved from its exclusive editorial contract with *Cahiers du cinéma*, including Jean-Luc Godard’s famous interview entitled “Struggle on Two Fronts” (1967).⁷ It then adopted a very strict interdisciplinary approach, which was most succinctly represented in the magazine’s editorial board consisting of Awazu Kiyoshi (graphic designer), Take-mitsu Tōru (music composer), Nakahara Yūsuke (art critic), Yamada Kōichi (film critic), and the filmmakers Iimura Takahiko, Matsumoto Toshio, and Teshigahara Hiroshi. Of particular importance here is the participation of the graphic designer Awazu. As the film historian Yomota Inuhiko tells us, the impressive cover designs he created for each issue using “multiple layers of colors” and “bricolages of pre-modern Japanese signs and motifs” (see figure 11.1) compellingly visualize the magazine’s conscious commitment to the practice of intermedial art as well as the carnivalesque atmosphere of late-1960s Japan.⁸

In comparison, *Shinema* 69 embodies the “DIY” spirit widely shared among a younger generation of Japanese film critics of the time (see figure 11.2). According to the bibliographic record, it was active from January 1969 to October 1971 and was published by the publishing house Shinemasha. In reality, this company meant nothing more than the small family apartment of the founder Hatano, an ex-staff member at the Sōgestu Art Center. And although the editors—Hatano, Tejima Shūzō, and Yamane Sadao—originally intended their magazine to be a bimonthly, they were only able to publish three issues per year, even after they decided to reduce its circulation by half—from four thousand to two thousand copies—and to stop paying honoraria to their contributors from the January 1971 issue onward.⁹ Despite such an unavoidable and persistent financial burden, the editors—especially Yamane as the writer of the magazine’s editorial—always sought solutions at the grassroots level. In addition to frequently asking the reader to take part in their annual subscription program, Yamane went so far as to make his personal home address and phone number publicly available so that anyone who wished to support this magazine could talk or visit him in person.

Today, *Shinema* 69 is remembered mostly for its discovery of Hasumi Shigehiko, who—with his distinctive writing style and up-to-date knowledge about French intellectual traditions, which he had obtained during his doctoral research at the Université de Paris from 1962 to 1965—became a towering figure in Japanese film criticism for the next two decades (I will come back to him in the next section). But the magazine itself also made a great contribution to the ongoing reform of Japanese film criticism by pursuing some fundamental questions, like “What is the main attraction of cinema?” and “What does it mean to write about this particular cinematic attraction, and how is it possible?” Despite their apparent naivete,



FIGURE 11.1. Front cover, *Kikan firumu*, no. 8, March 1971.



FIGURE 11.2. Front cover, *Shinema 69*, no. 1, January 1969.

these questions in effect reveal the magazine's strategic adoption of existentialist phenomenology as its own method. As if to follow Sartre's famous motto "Existence precedes essence," essays appearing in the magazine carefully tried to look at and describe film's own controversial state of being as experienced from each individual viewer's sensibility and understanding so that the very practice of "writing about cinema" could be more creative and autonomous.¹⁰ Another important feature of *Shinema 69* was its renewed treatment of mainstream Japanese cinema. While the magazine kept track of the increasing visibility of "New Wave" directors like Ōshima Nagisa and Yoshida Kijū abroad, its main focus was placed rather on the work of studio-based genre film directors such as Suzuki Seijun, Katō Tai, and

Makino Masahiro in a way similar to that of *Cahiers*'s famous appraisal of Howard Hawks and Alfred Hitchcock as film auteurs.¹¹

Finally, we have *Eiga hihyō*, which was active from October 1970 to September 1973 under the editorship of Matsuda Masao (see figure 11.3). Besides being a film critic, Matsuda had been widely known as one of the major ideologues and organizers of the Japanese New Left movement in the late 1960s. This meant that the assessment of the magazine became contingent on the political climate of the specific historical period called "post-1968." Undoubtedly, *Eiga hihyō* was more visible and influential than the other two film magazines when it first came out, given its blatant call for liberating the world and our daily consumption of film and other mass communication media from the hands of capitalists qua neo-imperialists. But this meant that the magazine's historical importance—or more simply, what it actually discussed—rapidly faded into oblivion along with the society's general disillusionment with New Left radicalism. This sort of negative assessment could also be easily amplified by the presence of the film director Adachi Masao on the magazine's editorial board. As is well known, Adachi secretly left Japan for Palestine in 1974 to become a member of the Japanese Red Army (*Nihon sekigun*), a far-left political faction that throughout the 1970s and '80s committed a series of terrorist attacks both inside and outside the Arab world under the leadership of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. As a result, few written or spoken statements were made by Adachi during his "underground" years, which abruptly ended with his arrest and forced repatriation to Japan around 2000.¹² Meanwhile, *Eiga hihyō* came to be seen and dismissed as simply spreading dogmatic political visions provided by those presumably dangerous terrorist organizations.

Now, to change our perspective, we should first consider the fact that Matsuda, *Eiga hihyō*'s editor, was equally motivated to revitalize Japanese film criticism. Indeed, the official mission of *Eiga hihyō* was to transform the whole process of making, distributing, showing, watching, and writing about films into a new form of social engagement called "movement" (*undō*).¹³ Interestingly, the term *movement* here meant less people's affiliation with actual political factions than an individual's critical decision to look at the world in its potentiality for change—a concept usually called *revolution*—and to apply this principle indiscriminately to the preexisting hierarchical divisions of labors between subject and object, mind and body, logic and emotion, theory and practice, producers and consumers, professionals and amateurs, and the everyday and political actions. To demonstrate this editorial policy even before the publication of the first issue, Matsuda and two other editorial members, Adachi and Sasaki Mamoru, had first produced an experimental film, *Ryakushō renzoku shasatsuma* (*A.K.A. Serial Killer*, 1969/75) together,¹⁴ developing one of the most important concepts in 1960s Japanese film and media theory, *fūkeiron* (landscape theory),



FIGURE 11.3. Front cover, *Eiga hihyō* 4, no. 8, August 1973.

as an open-ended discursive articulation of their collective engagement with independent filmmaking.¹⁵

DECENTERING FILM THEORY

In addition to these varying details, *Kikan firumu*, *Shinema 69*, and *Eiga hihyō* also shared a renewed sense of coequality with things happening outside Japan. Like *Kikan firumu*, *Shinema 69* made an editorial contract with the French film magazine of the same title (*Cinéma 69*, discussed in this volume by Kelley Conway) and, in every issue, organized a section titled “Situations of Cinema in the World” (*sekai no eiga jōkyō*) featuring a series of detailed firsthand reports from countries including Brazil, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, the Soviet Union, the UK, and the US. In contrast, *Eiga hihyō* selectively translated more political texts like Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin’s “Dziga Vertov Group in America” (1970) or Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino’s “Toward a Third Cinema” (1969) as examples of contemporary attempts to revolutionize our daily commitment to film as both a medium and a social practice.¹⁶ Nevertheless, a simple increase in numbers and amounts of translated text and transmitted information alone cannot differentiate these three magazines from their predecessors. As I have argued elsewhere, the history of Japanese film theory and criticism in the past century, especially during a period dubbed “classical” in our discipline, was always marked by a persistent desire to catch up with the latest discursive trends imported from abroad.¹⁷ Correspondingly, all the major works of canonical film theorists—including Hugo Münsterberg, Béla Balázs, Jean Epstein, Rudolf Arnheim, Vsevolod Pudovkin, Sergei Eisenstein, André Bazin, Siegfried Kracauer, and Guido Aristarco—were available to the Japanese readers of the 1960s through translation.

Therefore, it is not quantity but quality that matters. What is crucial here is that the radical and self-reflective reform of Japanese film criticism put forward by those three post-1968 magazines ultimately led to a radical reconceptualization of what we scholars call *theory* and its application to a specific medium called *film*. Given its editorial focus on the legacy of avant-garde art movements, it seems natural that *Kikan firumu* addressed this issue by devising an “alternative” genealogy of theorizations of cinema from the perspective of experimental filmmaking. The result was the October 1971 special issue titled “Eiga sengenshū” (A Collection of Film Manifestos) which, just like P. Adams Sitney’s *The Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Film Theory and Criticism* (1978) or Scott MacKenzie’s *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures* (2021), comprehensively compiled and translated key written texts by a variety of film practitioners qua theorists including Georges Méliès, Ricciotto Canudo, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Paul Wagner, Vsevolod Meyerhold, René Clair, Germaine Dulac, Alexandre Astruc, Cesare Zavattini, Orson Welles, Luis Buñuel, Maya Deren, Jonas Mekas, Glauber Rocha, and Robert

Kramer.¹⁸ Equally notable was a collection of Dziga Vertov's written manifestos and essays, published in the March 1971 issue of the same magazine.¹⁹ Directly translated from the 1966 Russian edition of Vertov's writings, this Japanese version appeared in full synchronicity with its English equivalent "The Writings of Dziga Vertov" (1970), included in Sitney's other anthology, *Film Culture Reader*.

However informative, this quasi-encyclopedic approach was problematic in that it acknowledged no substantial contributions from Japan or other non-Western countries, despite its conscious attempt to rewrite the history of film theory from a different and previously marginalized perspective. This was exactly the problem the film historian Satō Tadao squarely addressed in his book-length essay "Nihon no eiga riron" (Film Theory in Japan), published serially in *Shinema* 69 from January 1969 to June 1971. To begin, Satō provocatively asked if there had been any film theory that one could distinctively call "Japanese." His answer was no, as long as readers uncritically accepted the traditional definition of *theory* and its unassailable monopoly by the West. "Individuals who have written in books on film theory in Japan," said Satō, "have mainly authored translations introducing foreign film theory," and therefore, "in Japan, unfortunately, very few individuals can be called film theorists."²⁰ Satō's polemic here was employed less to lament the absence of Japanese theorists with original insights than to illuminate a uniquely "Japanese" take on the definition of *film theory* as such. He thus went on to write: "It is not that Japan has no original film theory. . . . Unfortunately, however, Japanese film theory remains disorganized, buried in the word-of-mouth training at production studios, in the short essays and written interviews of directors and screenwriters, and in the film reviews written by critics."²¹

According to Satō, only a specific kind of local discourse developed and shared among practitioners working within the film industry in its largest sense could properly be called a Japanese film theory. This provocative statement, however, turned out to be less radical than it seemed, once he disclosed his own argument. First, Satō devoted a critical amount of his analysis to the work of Japanese writers with no professional experience in the industry, including Nakagawa Shigeaki (aesthetician), Terada Torahiko (poet and physicist), Sugiyama Heiichi (poet and film critic), Imamura Taihei (film critic), Ōtsuki Kenji (economist), Nakai Masakazu (philosopher), and Hanada Kiyoteru (writer and critic). Second, his strategic emphasis on a practical and vernacular local discourse cannot be a substantial point of reference to differentiate Japanese film theory from others. Indeed, D. N. Rodowick reminds us that quite a few examples of the texts we consider "canons" of classical film theory were equally developed, to a large extent, by means of filmmakers' self-reflection and published in a wide variety of "unorganized" and "non-academic" writing forms such as film reviews, written manifestos, and poetic or fictional prose.²² Finally, Satō's counterargument unfortunately stopped before providing a more fundamental critique of theory as a specific mode of writing and knowledge production. This means that once he succeeded in

expanding the geographic scope of film theory to include previously unrecognized Japanese contributions, he automatically applied the same evaluative criteria as before, only praising what one of his fellow Japanese critics rightly criticized as the “normative aesthetic” (*kihanteki bigaku*).

Importantly, it is Hasumi Shigehiko, another significant contributor to *Shinema* 69, who made this last criticism in his 1971 article titled “Eizō no riron kara riron no eizō e” (From a Theory of an Image to an Image of a Theory).²³ In this and other related essays published around the turn of the 1970s, Hasumi harshly criticized his fellow critics for failing to problematize their anachronistic acceptance of theory as a discourse of universal emancipation. This was because theory, he argued, especially in its current state, served as a discourse of oppression inasmuch as it violently integrates parts into the whole and mercilessly excludes any false or uncertain claims in its totalitarian pursuit of the so-called general truth. To liberate theory from such a reactionary state, Hasumi intentionally adopted a post-structuralist stance: rather than proposing “practical” or “anti-theoretical” discourse as an antidote, he first and foremost aimed to subvert the preexisting hierarchical relationship between word and image in his new conception of “film theory” in accordance with Jacques Derrida’s contemporary attempt to deconstruct similar pairs of oppositional terms including mind and image, speech and writing, reason and experience, presence and absence, and the signifier and the signified.

This, however, does not mean that Hasumi totally denied the relevance of theory as a mode of critical inquiry. Indeed, he still employed the adjective *theoretical* time and again to designate his own “logical” attempt to clarify the ontological condition of an object or phenomenon under consideration. The difference was that people could now perform this practice through image, through their empirical commitment to both the making and viewing of film texts. It is in this context that Hasumi paid tribute to the work of a selected list of filmmakers who had consciously and persistently developed an internal critique of film as both a genuinely modern and institutionalized form of expression. One such director was Ozu Yasujiro, and Hasumi interpreted the director’s constant violation of an imaginary line between the two on-screen characters in conversation as a highly self-reflective attempt to visualize what film *cannot* show us in principle—namely, the gaze that these two characters actually shared and exchanged.²⁴ In the end, Hasumi succinctly summarized his own intervention as an attempt not to establish a new film theory in its traditional sense, but rather to retrieve a theory of *the cinema* (*eiga to iumono*) that each individual film text embodies and speaks whenever it is both projected on screen *and* rightly interpreted by perceptive viewers like Hasumi himself.

Thanks to his provocative call for a “return” to films themselves, Hasumi soon came to be recognized as a gamechanger in post-1968 Japanese film criticism and remained influential for the next two decades. It is not difficult to criticize Hasumi for his apparently phenomenologist stance, his decision to put everything

he deemed to be external to the autonomy of a film text—including social, financial, and ideological conditions of filmmaking—into brackets. As Aaron Gerow points out, however, Hasumi's apolitical intervention here should rather be seen as "a different politics, one that, stemming in part from a disillusionment with orthodoxies of 1960s radical politics and their claims of authority, struggled against universal abstractions, metanarratives, and other forms of categorical meaning that restricted the inherent creativity of criticism and film viewing."²⁵ Indeed, we should keep in mind that Hasumi addressed his critique not only to Satō's serialized essay but also to a series of debates presented by *Eiga hihyō* regarding terms such as *theory*, *criticism*, and *movement*. That said, my focus here does not go directly to the apparently political arguments posed by the magazine's main contributors like Hiraoka Masaaki and Ōta Ryū. Given their close relations with far-left political factions like the Japanese Red Army, their discussions tended to presume the existence of "Theory with a capital T"—a theory, of course, of world revolution. Instead, I illuminate how editor Matsuda dealt with the reconfiguration of "film theory" in his own terms.

Matsuda's critical engagement with theory had already started in the early 1950s, when he became a member of the JCP at the age of sixteen. Pursuing his career as a "professional" revolutionary, he soon realized the importance of theory as an indispensable tool to articulate and radicalize his daily (and physical) commitment to direct political actions taken under the JCP's 1951 militant line. However, Matsuda was always discontent with his colleagues' "unrevolutionary" treatment of theory—Marxist or otherwise—as a transcendental discourse that had always come from abroad (or above) to authorize their worldview a priori.²⁶ Notably, Matsuda argued that this was a problem rooted in Japan's belated experience of modernity, whereby generations of intellectuals had passively adopted a newly imported concept like *culture*, *theory*, or *revolution* only as a noun, a pure object of study to catch up with the West.²⁷ To depart from such a semi-colonized state, Matsuda went on to suggest that we treat those same imported concepts as verbs, deliberately challenging both the geopolitical and discursive conditions that had preemptively determined our epistemological judgments.

With his conscious attempt to verbalize theory, Matsuda brought about the following conversions. First, he liberated theory—or the very act of theorizing, to be more precise—from its contemporaneous domination by the West and Global North, with particular attention paid to the work of Third World Marxist revolutionaries like Frantz Fanon and Che Guevara. Second, he transformed theory into a discourse that corresponded to what he called "the voice-less consciousness" located at the bottom of our mind, a space including anger, emotion, feeling, affect, and violence. Consequently, emphasis was placed more on our sensory experience (perception and intuition) than on cognition (abstraction and reasoning). Finally, he treated theory as a site of collective thinking, thus always destined for eternal and unexpected changes, rather than as a finished product by a single author.

The last point is best represented in Matsuda's peculiar commitment to the debate on "landscape theory." Originally proposed by Matsuda through his participation in the production of *A.K.A. Serial Killer*, this theory suggested that we treat all the banal and standardized landscapes we encounter in our everyday life as a pure embodiment of state power.²⁸ But Matsuda quickly withdrew his commitment, even while the term *landscape* became a buzzword among his fellow critics working not only in film but also in photography, graphic design, music, city designs, and so on. This was partly because he was fully aware of the regressive (and unavoidable) transformation of his own concept into a commodity by print journalism and other industries. (For instance, the Japan National Railways ran an advertising campaign called "Discover Japan" with a marked emphasis on the beauty of Japanese rural landscapes.) But a more profound reason was that Matsuda, through a series of conversations with other commentators on his concept, came to realize that whatever he created—whether it be an independent film or a theoretical concept—remained a manifestation of antirevolutionary cultural capital as long as he was unmindful of the material conditions through which he produced and disseminated these products.²⁹ In other words, he now realized the importance of the *infrastructure* of theory and knowledge production.

This is why Matsuda decided to launch his own film magazine, *Eiga hihyō*, as an open and independent site for theoretical discussions of film and its socio-political use. As the founder and editor-in-chief, Matsuda made every effort to run the business without relying upon advertisements from major film companies and distributors. Consequently, he ended up publishing only a handful of articles with his signature in this magazine, while giving more space to young and upcoming contributors like Tsumura Takashi. Given the overtly militant, far-left-leaning atmosphere of the period in general and of the magazine in particular, whether this editorial policy yielded a successful outcome is open to discussion. But through his rare and admirable dedication to the infrastructure of theory, Matsuda still advanced his new dictum: "Media must transform themselves."³⁰ For Matsuda, the term *media* meant a device, a tool, or even a concept that generates "movements" among those who use or live with them, whereas the term *movement* in his lexicon meant the reciprocal traffic between sensual experience and intellectual reflection. Matsuda's intention was therefore to reinvent theory as one of those self-transforming media, along with film's own transformation into anything but the single privileged form of modern audiovisual experience.

Here, we can also rephrase Matsuda's dictum more simply as "Theory as a medium must transform itself." But how is this possible? This is exactly the question that we, as scholars of film and its global circulation, must address in earnest in our own historical context. Why, for instance, do we still hold on to the idea that what we call "theory" in our own discipline is, and continues to be, an exclusive domain of the West or Global North? How could we alter or update our notion

of theory by deliberately integrating those long-forgotten but no less illuminative contributions from the rest of the world into our curricula? It goes without saying that Japanese film magazines, especially the ones I have discussed in this chapter, enable us to advance this urgent and unavoidable pedagogical mission from an inherently comparative and transnational perspective.

NOTES

1. Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan, "Statistics of Film Industry in Japan: 1955–2020," http://www.eiren.org/statistics_e/index.html (accessed December 20, 2023).

2. Ibid.

3. Hatano Tetsurō, "Sengo eiga hihyō e no tabi: Shiron," *Shinema* 71, no. 8 (June 1971): 38–43. Throughout this chapter, Japanese names appear in their original order unless otherwise specified.

4. In addition to sharing these editorial strategies, *Kikan firumu*, *Shinema* 69, and *Eiga hihyō* also appeared as part of the burgeoning "ciné-club" movement. On April 25, 1968, the film company Nikkatsu abruptly announced the dismissal of the veteran director Suzuki Seijun and refused to lend his films to the non-profitable screenings planned to be held between May and July of the same year, organized by the Ciné-Club Study Group (Shine kurabu kenkyūkai), the biggest among Japanese film societies with three thousand active members. Furious about this self-righteous business decision, members of the ciné-club held a mass demonstration in Tokyo's central Ginza district, asking for their own "right" to watch the films they wanted, rather than the ones imposed by the company. At the same time, a group of concerned directors, staff members, and film critics formed an alliance called the Joint Struggle Committee for the Suzuki Seijun Problem (Suzuki Seijun mondai kyōtō kaigi) to support Suzuki's lawsuit against Nikkatsu. This event clearly marked a watershed moment in the history of Japanese film criticism in that it captured the increasing concern about the autonomy of film viewers. Matsuda Masao, the editor of *Eiga hihyō*, served as the committee chair, and other active members also became main contributors to the other two new film magazines.

5. Yamada Kōichi and Awazu Kiyoshi, "Hakkan no kotoba," *Kikan firumu*, no. 1 (October 1968).

6. See, for example, Iimura Takahiko, "Chikaku ni okeru jikken," *Kikan firumu*, no. 1 (October 1968): 108–13; Ishizaki Kōichirō, "Kankaku no kakudai: Andōguraundo eiga no henbō," *Kikan firumu*, no. 1 (October 1968): 114–16; Konno Tsutomu, "Video seitaigaku to fukusha no shisō," *Kikan firumu*, no. 12 (July 1972): 103–22.

7. Jean-Luc Godard, "Futatsu no sensen no tōsō wo okonau," trans. Shibata Hayao and Yamada Kōichi, *Kikan firumu*, no. 1, 47–73.

8. Yomota Inuhiko, "Sekai no meiro no nakade," in *Geijutsu no yokgen: 60 nen-dai radikaru karuchua no kiseki*, ed. Yabuzaki Kyōko (Tokyo: Firumu ātosha, 2008), 12.

9. For the magazine's revenue and expenditure, see Yamane Sadao, "Media to shite no eiga to zasshi," *Shinema* 71, no. 7 (January 1971): 93–96.

10. See, for example, Hasumi Shigehiko, "Hihyō to firumu taiken," *Shinema* 71, no. 8 (June 1971): 2–14.

11. Indeed, the magazine frequently edited special issues dedicated to contemporary Japanese filmmakers such as Ōshima Nagisa (no. 4), Fukasaku Kinji (no. 5), Yoshida Kijū (no. 6), and Imamura Shōhei (no. 7).

12. After his return to Japan, Adachi started making films again, and his recent films include *Yūheisha/Terrorisuto* (*Prisoner/Terrorist*, 2007), *Danjiki geinin* (*Artist of Fasting*, 2016), and *Revolution+1* (2022).

13. See, for example, Matsuda Masao, "Hihyō no kasseika no tameni," *Chūō Daigaku Shinbun*, January 21, 1969, reprinted in Matsuda Masao, *Bara to mumeisha* (Tokyo: Haga shoten, 1970), 299–304.

14. A.K.A. *Serial Killer* is an experimental documentary film about Nagayama Norio, a nineteen-year-old serial killer who murdered four random people using the gun he stole from the US Navy stationed in Yokosuka. Instead of telling a life story of this teenage murderer, the film is composed entirely of the “landscapes” he was supposed to see in his escape journey from Abashiri, Hokkaido, to Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya, Osaka, and Hong Kong. Although the film was completed in 1969, Matsuda and his collaborators decide not to screen it publicly, due to the ongoing shift in their own commitment to filmmaking and film criticism. The film was finally released in 1975.

15. For more on the “landscape theory,” see Harry Harootunian and Sabu Kohso, “Message in a Bottle: An Interview with Adachi Masao,” *boundary 2* 35, no. 3 (2008): 63–97; Yuriko Furuhashi, *Cinema of Actuality: Japanese Avant-Garde Filmmaking in the Season of Image Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 115–48; Rei Terada, “Repletion: Masao Adachi’s Totality,” *Qui Parle* 24, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2016): 15–43.

16. Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin, “Jiga Verutofu shūdan no shisō,” *Eiga hihyō* 2, no. 11 (November 1971), 14–25; O. Getino and F. Solanas, “Dai-san sekai no eiga ni mukatte,” *Eiga hihyō* 4, no. 1 (January 1973), 116–27.

17. See my *Dialectics without Synthesis: Japanese Film Theory and Realism in a Global Frame* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020).

18. “Eiga sengenshū,” *Kikan firumu*, no. 10 (October 1971), 89–127.

19. Dziga Vertov, “Manifesuto to ronbun,” trans. Fukushima Noriyuki, “Nikki to kōsō (shō),” trans. Moriyama Akira and Moriyama Kazuo, and “Kamera wo motta otoko,” trans. Okada Kazuo, *Kikan firumu*, no. 8 (March 1971): 10–31, 32–44, and 45–47.

20. Satō Tadao, “Joshō: Nihon ni eiga riron wa attaka,” *Shinema* 69, no. 1 (January 1969): 72.

21. Satō, “Joshō: Nihon ni eiga riron wa attaka,” 73. An English translation is available as Satō Tadao, “Does Film Theory Exist in Japan?,” trans. Joanne Bernardi, *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 22 (December 2010): 14–23. Later, in 1977, Satō also published a monograph, *Nihon eiga rironshi* (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1977), based on the serialized essays he wrote for *Shinema* 69.

22. D. N. Rodowick, *Elegy for Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 54–80.

23. Hasumi Shigehiko, “Eizō no riron kara riron no eizō e,” *Shinema* 71, no. 9 (October 1971), 73–96.

24. Hasumi, “Eizō no riron kara riron no eizō e,” 78–80. See also Shiguhiko Hasumi, *Directed by Ozu Yasujiro*, intro. Aaron Gerow, trans. Ryan Cook (Oakland: University of California Press, 2024).

25. Aaron Gerow, “Critical Reception: Historical Conceptions of Japanese Film Criticism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Cinema*, ed. Daisuke Miyao (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 74.

26. For Matsuda’s early life, see Matsuda Masao, “Matsuda Masao ga kataru sengo shisō no 10-nin (1),” *Kikan Gendai no riron*, no. 8 (Summer 2006): 212–22.

27. Matsuda Masao, “Naraku no tabi e no tojō de,” in *Fūkei no shimetsu*, rev. ed. (Tokyo: Kōshisha, 2013), 90–103.

28. See, for example, Matsuda Masao, “Misshitsu, Fūkei, kenryoku,” in *Bara to mumeisha* (Tokyo: Haga Shoten, 1970), 123–26.

29. This critique was made by Tsumura Takashi, one of the most perceptive media theorists in post-1968 Japan. Though still in his early twenties and a student at Waseda University, Tsumura became a major contributor to *Eiga hihyō* and published several monographs, including *Warera no uchinaru sabetsu* (Tokyo: San’ichi shobō, 1970) and *Media no seiji* (Tokyo: Shōbunsha, 1974), before he abruptly stopped his contributions to media criticism and became a qigong (*kikō*) practitioner in the 1980s.

30. Matsuda Masao, “Media to gyaku ni media ni,” in *Fukanōsei no media* (Tokyo: Tabata shoten, 1973), 300–313.

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