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Alienation and Recognition: Japanese Television Series from a German Perspective¹

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Whoever turns on the television in a foreign country is confronted with unfamiliar broadcasts and programming. The impression of strangeness is perhaps increased by unfamiliarity with the language. With time, however, the sense of foreignness gives way to recognition. The programs have different names and different moderators, but the types of broadcasts frequently correspond to one's television experience at home. The television guide even lists programs which can be seen in one's native country. For example, during an evening in front of a television set in the U.S., one learns that the German quiz show "Pyramide" ("Pyramid") is merely a licensed franchise. The Japanese series "Sensei no Okiniiri" ("Teacher's Pet") is a variation of the NBC program "Fame". Television favorites at home are replaced after a few weeks of viewing by new preferences, the broadcasting schedule is internalized and viewing habits are established quickly. With time, the language recedes into the background. Soon one can follow the plot of a family series without understanding the text, and even magazine shows seem comprehensible.

At the line between apparent and actual comprehension, one experiences television that is

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generally very similar to what one is accustomed to at home while differing in details. This experience is related to a specter which is repeatedly conjured up in journals and critical presentations on media.² According to this apocalyptic theory, television is becoming uniform throughout the world and we are witnessing an international standardization. American television is apparently exporting its broadcasts and types of programs—and, simultaneously, its values—throughout the world.³ It is not, however, the similarity of programming which lies behind this complaint; rather, one fears a leveling *by means of* television, a disappearance of national cultural differences as a result of equalized and equalizing television. However, this disintegration would result from cultural leveling rather than constructive, popular agreement. This entirely convincing thesis of the leveling of and by means of television programming world-wide must be examined in detail.

The object of this study is a specific genre, the series, which will be analyzed in the context of two national broadcasts. The Japanese television series will be compared with its German counterpart. Using the series as an example, national peculiarities of television programming will be identified, while similarities and differences will be uncovered and interpreted.

Without knowledge of Japanese, the status of research seems problematic. While there are extensive publications in German on the structure and technical aspects of Japanese television⁴, little attention has been paid to programming.⁵ Myths about Japanese television circulate in Germany, such as the notoriety of brutal Japanese quiz shows, which are said to have extraordinarily inhuman rules.⁶ Yet neither quiz shows nor other types of Japanese broadcasts have been shown on television here. Instead, these stereotypes reflect the image of Japan that many Europeans hold rather than their knowledge in the area of television.

The *Japanese Association of Broadcasting Art (JABA)* would like to fill in these gaps in knowledge. In 1991, Matsunori Sata and Hideo Hirahara published the first international piece on the broadcasting forms series and television drama,⁷ a history in English of Japanese television play focusing on works with artistic intent.

In addition to the paucity of literature, there is another hindrance to research which the JABA also laments and which Japan and Germany have in common. In both countries, there are no public collections of recorded broadcasts which are accessible to the researcher. A visit

2 cf. e. g. Gellner 1989; Schardt/Brüske 1986

3 Schneider/Wallis 1988, 8

4 cf. e. g. Hanada/Winckler 1984

5 cf. Hanada/Winckler 1984, 113–187

6 cf. also de Stains 1985

7 Sata/Hirahara 1991; cf. Brandt 1991; Ritchie 1991

to the *Museum of Television and Radio* in New York underscores this deficit. Here one finds a collection of tapes which anyone who is interested can view in a carrel without a good deal of advance notice. The broadcasts are systematically catalogued in a computer which is easy to use, and tours and daily presentations complete this institution's program.

German and Japanese researchers are far removed from these ideal prerequisites. Many programs which are relevant for the researcher are kept by the broadcasting studios, but they are not accessible. Consequently, videocassettes are privately copied to the point of unrecognizability and shared by colleagues, a process which is necessarily haphazard, time-consuming and aesthetically unsatisfactory.

Even given ideal research conditions, there remains one fundamental methodological problem for which no collection can compensate. The selection of a single program (as in the museum) or a particular broadcasting form (as this essay attempts to do) is controversial if one understands television as a medium characterized precisely by its uninterrupted flow. As a transitory medium, television constantly eludes analysis. Every attempt to immobilize the object of analysis changes it. What belongs in the steady progress of a program is lifted out and, as a result, altered.

This insight into the nature of the medium does not, however, preclude work with a single broadcast. It simply assigns such work a specific value. As a defined entity for research, the analysis of an individual broadcasting form makes sense as long as its limitations remain clear. After all, no international comparison can be made without specific analyses, for only in this manner can national differences be worked out.

(1) Feature Film and Series:

The Role of the Series in Program Planning

Since 1991, two publishing houses have introduced a new type of television guide to the West German market.⁸ Every two weeks, two inexpensive magazines are published which offer the listings for all channels which can be received in the country on approximately 250 colorfully illustrated pages.⁹ But it is not the extensiveness of these new guides that distinguishes them from those that have been available at newsstands for some time. It is the focus on program information which is new. The titles of the magazines indicate the perspectives of the publishers: *TV-Spielfilm* ("TV-Feature Film") competes with *TV-Movie* for the favor of the television audience. While quiz shows, news programs and many series are listed only by title, these magazines provide photos, plot summary and credits for each film. The covers give an indication of the reason for such new overviews. The banner promises "all

400 feature films for the next 14 days". This embodies the strategy of German program planning, for in the course of a month, the German television consumer can choose from almost 900 feature films, not counting the nightly re-runs of films already broadcast during the day.

A comparable television guide is inconceivable on the Japanese market, for even with extensive summaries it would fill only a few pages. Even the Japanese television guides "TV Pia" and "TV Bros.", which are relatively strongly oriented to feature films, could not be expected to develop such a specialization,¹⁰ for while all German program planners arrange one feature film after another, adopting cinema films remains the exception in Japan. Except for the new pay-TV channel WOWOW, which specializes in American films, the Japanese broadcasting stations often show exclusively programs produced for television. During the summer months of 1991, scarcely more than 20 feature films were broadcast per week on all channels, barely a tenth of the German offering. Of the fictional genres, series and television dramas clearly lead the programming in Japan.

The German viewers' preference for feature films is not the only explanation for the flood of cinema films in German television, which is actually the result of a serious change in the television offering. While Japan has always had commercial channels (the *min-po*) in addition to NHK, channels financed by advertisements were not permitted in the Federal Republic of Germany until the mid-1980's.¹¹ On the one hand, this lag in national developments influences the respective program planning of the broadcasters; for example, it affects the number and distribution of the series. On the other hand, it also has consequences for the individual broadcast.

In Japan, naming the sponsors has a distinct place, while series sponsorship has just begun in Germany. The listing of contributors and the commercial interruptions lend the series a clear time frame. A new program always begins on the hour, and the opening credits are followed by a list of sponsors and the first commercial break. The first part of the program is interrupted after 20 minutes of broadcasting, the second part of the story lasts an additional 15 minutes, and the third commercial break follows the closing episode. After 50 minutes the final credits begin, another commercial is followed by the preview for the next week and, once again, the list of sponsors. Commercials and sponsor credits are consequently an integral part of every broadcast. A program of several episodes such as "Depato! Natsu Monogatari" ("Department store! Summer Story"), which depicts the misfortunes and love life of a clumsy young salesman, was even set directly in one of the branch department stores of the sponsor *Isetan*.

⁸ cf. ZDF 1986

⁹ Currently, the leading program guides list 34 channels, 20 of which broadcast in a foreign language.

¹⁰ In addition to a short summary, both of these television guides list the original title and the running time of the film.

¹¹ Noell-Neumann 1990, 330-360

Ownership determines not only the financing and associated scheduling of the individual series but also the selection. The dual broadcasting system influences the entire context for series.

As a "public broadcaster", NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai)¹² is in some respects comparable to the two German Public broadcasting stations ARD (Association of German Public Media Stations) and ZDF (Second German Television). ARD and ZDF also finance their work according to the British model on the basis of fees, although supplemented by advertising income. RTLplus and SAT1, the two largest private channels, are financed solely through advertising.

The new competition is forcing the public stations ARD and ZDF to expand their broadcasting time to full programming. Pressured by the morning programming of commercial stations, both ARD and ZDF now offer viewing before noon,¹³ an expansion which has been common practice in Japan since 1961. Competition has also pushed back the time at which public stations go off the air. The national anthem ends broadcasting workdays at one o'clock.

Due to the new broadcasting stations and the expansion of broadcasting times, the need for programs has increased greatly. On the one hand, the additional broadcasting time is covered by reruns of evening programs in the morning and feature films in the evening, while private stations rely more on inexpensively acquired sex and action films for nighttime programming. On the other hand, series fill the daytime programming of commercial stations, following the American model of stacking several, usually older series one after the other. TV classics such as "Bonanza" or "Daktari" are regularly repeated, Telly Savallas can still be seen as "Kojak", and Peter Falk also appears each week as "Columbo". In 1991, RTLplus showed three series in a row each afternoon; every workday, the soap opera "Guiding Light"¹⁴ was followed first by "Dallas", then by the police series "CHiPs". "Knight Rider", "Magnum, P.I.", the lawyers of "L.A. Law" or the unequal detective pair in "Moonlighting"¹⁵—the German television viewer can see them all in one week.¹⁶ With a delay of a few months (sometimes even years), successful U.S. series reach German television, often upon waning popularity at

12 cf. NHK Factsheet No. 1 1991

13 Public stations offer "breakfast viewing" only for those who sleep late: daily programming does not begin until 8:30 a.m., while the stations in Japan that have no full programming begin broadcasting no later than 6:00 a.m.

14 Known in Germany as "Springfield Story".

15 Known in Germany as "Das Modell und der Schnüffler" ("The Model and the Snoot").

16 *CHiPs* (NBC 1976–1983); *Bonanza* (NBC 1959–1973); *Daktari* (CBS 1966–1969); *Kojak* (CBS 1974–1978), *Columbo* (NBC 1971–1977); *Knight Rider* (NBC 1982–1986); *Magnum, P.I.* (CBS since 1980); *L.A. Law* (NBC since 1986); *Moonlighting* (ABC since 1985)

home.

A Japanese viewer who watches a good deal of television will also know many of these series but will not be able to fill up his evening of viewing with such a menu. From a German perspective, the higher total number of series in Japanese television is not nearly as amazing as the small (and diminishing) proportion of imported series.

(2) Import and Autonomy:

The series in In-House Production

Late in the summer of 1991, an average of only 16 different series of foreign—that is, as a rule, American—origin could be seen on all seven stations which can be received terrestrially in Tokyo.¹⁷ These imports, far fewer in number than in Germany, are also seldom included in the main programming in Japan. "MacGyver" begins here at 2:10 a.m., "Hart to Hart" at 3:15 a.m., "L.A. Law" at 4:15 a.m. Half of the 16 series do not begin until after 2:00 a.m. Beyond this, most of the broadcasting is on workdays; only 5 series are placed on Friday, Saturday or Sunday.

In addition to the comparatively small number and the unpopular broadcasting times, one sees a limitation of purchase to one genre. About 75% of the imports are crime series, while American family series or soap operas are virtually absent from the program offerings. These types of series are almost exclusively provided by Japanese productions.

This observation about a genre corresponds to the business practices of Japanese broadcasters. Between April 1989 and March 1990, NHK bought only 663 foreign programs for a total of about 550 broadcasting hours. These broadcasts constitute a decreasing portion of the total programming, for they represent only about 4% of NHK's total broadcasting time. Compared to other countries, Japan is thus slightly behind the American broadcasting stations, which acquire only about 2% of their volume from another country.¹⁸ If one compares this with the statistics of European stations, the exceptional nature of the Japanese market becomes apparent. As many as 30% of the programs shown in Europe are foreign, and almost half of these are imported from the U.S.A.¹⁹

In the context of the total 550 broadcasting hours which were introduced, NHK also bought a few foreign series, among others 24 episodes of "Dynasty" and a set of the western family series "Little House on the Prairie",²⁰ yet the success of these broadcasts has been modest compared to the number of viewers who have tuned in to the programs produced in Japan. Domestic productions dominate even in the crime genre, the primary import; for even

17 The sample is drawn from the time period of August and September 1991.

18 Varis 1986, 240

19 Varis 1986, 241

20 Known in Germany as "Denver Clan" and "Unsere kleine Farm" (Our Little Farm").

with the American competition, the Japanese television viewer prefers the investigative work of the clever forensics doctor "Jokyoju Isshiki Reiko" or the episodes of the squad "Deka Kizoku".

With all the differences in the respective program planning, both countries concur in one point: in spite of all the imports, the German television viewer also prefers indigenous series. With the exception of the—by now former—success of the prime time serial "Dallas", the German series are far more popular than their American competitors. In times of stiff competition for the market, broadcasting stations are consequently forced to intensify the production of German series. The year 1992 will be a year of the indigenous series in Germany.

(3) Country of Production and Number of Viewers:

The Series in Broadcasting Competition

With the beginning of a new year of broadcasting, the public stations are increasing their emphasis on series during pre-evening programming. However, unlike RTLplus or SAT1, they broadcast these series once a week as a special broadcast rather than daily in a genre block. Especially ZDF has provided an example of this in past years and wants to build on its front-running position in the area of series with new productions in 1992. A series about a teacher, episodes about a hotel on the vacation island Mallorca, stories from an animal shelter and the experiences of a country doctor are the heart of the program offerings.

ARD		
	5:35 — 6:30 p.m.	6:45 — 7:45 p.m.
Mo	"Frikadelle / Tagliatelle"	"Novak"
Tu	"Buten & Binnen" ("Outside & In")	"Der Fahnder" ("The Seeker")
We	"Das Nest" ("The Nest")	"Praxis Bülowbogen" ("The Bülowbogen Practice")
Th	"Young Riders" (import)	—
Fr	"Heidi und Ernie" ("Heide and Ernie")	—
Sa	—	—

ZDF		
	5:50 — 6:50 p.m.	7:20 — ca. 8:15 p.m.
Mo	"Ein Fall für zwei" ("A Case for Two")	—
Tu	"Unser Lehrer Dr. Specht" ("Our Teacher Dr. Specht")	"Regina auf den Stufen" ("Regina on the Steps")
We	"Hotel Paradies" ("Paradise Hotel")	—
Th	"Ein Heim für Tiere" ("A Shelter for Animals")	—
Fr	"Die Simpsons" (import) ("The Simpsons")	"Der Landarzt" ("The Country Doctor")
Sa	"Die fliegenden Ärzte" (import) ("The Flying Doctors")	"Mit Herz und Schnauze" ("With Heart and Muzzle")

Both quantity and origin of these series are stressed here, for only three of the seventeen pre-evening series on public stations are imported. This presentation of in-house productions distinguishes the offering of the private stations from that of the public stations, for almost all German series are produced by ARD and ZDF. RTLplus and SAT1, the two leading private stations in Germany, did not begin producing their own series until last year. In 1991, in addition to about 25 American series shown daily, RTLplus showed for the first time the in-house production "Ein Schloß am Wörthersee" (A Castle on Lake Woerther).²¹ In the spring of 1992, RTLplus will begin a soap opera modelled after a Dutch series, the first daily series on the market produced in Germany. With the great success of the series "Ein Schloß am Wörthersee", one can assume that private stations will follow suit with series production as soon as they are financially able to, for these in-house productions with their large number of viewers greatly determine the profile of a broadcasting station.

The country of production alone, however, need not be a guarantee for a greater autonomy in programming. For example, although all quiz shows shown on German television are also produced here, none of them can hardly be called "German". Adoptions—i.e., the purchases of licenses—determine the game shows in Germany. Such imitations can also be found in the area of series. The great success of "Dallas", for example, led ZDF to produce its imitator "The Guldenburgs", a series about a multimillionaire brewing dynasty. Although such direct and easily identifiable influences are the exception, the international standards—i.e., U.S. precedents—can be seen in these imitations, which are also customary in Japan.

21 Series produced for children are not included.

(4) Model and Variations:

The Adaptation of the American Family series

Even without a knowledge of the language, one's first contact with the team "Deka Kizoku" ("The Honorable Detectives") is fairly comfortable. As a detective series, the pattern is easy to understand. In short, a crime must be solved. While much of the investigation consists of large sections of dialogue, it is always easy to tell what is happening. Comprehension is also aided by familiarity with an American series. In general if not in detail, "Deka Kizoku" is much like "Miami Vice", as in the stressed casualness and fashionable extravagance of the two main characters. Even when the investigators wear white gloves at the scene of the crime or conduct a search in a *Pachinko* hall, the main impression is one of familiarity. There is a tradition in Japanese television of an orientation to popular U.S. programs, as Hideo Hirahara has shown with the example of the family series.²²

In the late 1950's, broadcasts of "I Love Lucy", the series "Lassie" and "Father Knows Best" were very popular.²³ Parallel to the purchase of these programs, NHK as well as the commercial networks developed Japanese series which borrowed the model of the American series family. In 1958, NTV was already broadcasting "Mama Chotto Kite" ("Mother, Come Here a Minute"), NHK followed in 1959 with "Otosan no Kisetu" ("Father's Season"), TBS produced "Sakiko-san chotto" (Sakiko, Look!) in 1961, and Fuji started "Manmosu Kazoku" ("Mammoth Family") in 1963. According to Hirahara, the high point of these imitations was marked by the series "Shichi-nin no Mago" ("Seven Grandchildren") and "Tadama Juichi-nin" ("Now We are Eleven"), both of which TBS broadcast in 1964.

The adaptation of a program first changed the language and the setting; then, increasingly, the constellation of characters and the potential for conflict in the series varied—although not to such a degree that one might speak of national autonomy. In the end, the American family series was simply "Japanized". To be sure, one can distinguish specific national problems about the themes, such as the relationship between Japanese sons and their mothers.²⁴ In this respect, series which follow American patterns closely are of interest in analyzing national differences. Since almost every country has a national response to the American family series of the 1950's and 1960's, this is a clear opportunity for such a comparison of imitations.

"Formula families"—large families with an understanding father and a loving mother who raise their open and honest children with tolerance and love—shaped the series of this time

22 Hirahara 1991

23	<i>I Love Lucy</i>	CBS/1951–1956	NHK/1957
	<i>Lassie</i>	CBS/1954–1971	TBS/1957
	<i>Father Knows Best</i>	CBS; NBC; ABC/1954–1963	NTV/1958

24 Hirahara 1991, 130

in Germany, too. The problems which arise never touch the foundation of the family, which always remains intact. The love of the parents needs no proof, and their understanding for their children is tested for only a short time. If the essentially good sons and daughters get carried away, the resulting problem is solved and overcome during the broadcast time. Before the conclusion, all conflicts are eliminated.

Such classic family series are no longer to be found in Germany or in Japan. But even the more contemporary family series with more open and complex problems account for only a modest portion of Japanese television when compared to German programming. In German productions, the plot is generally dictated by changing adult relationships and conflicts between the generations. The trend is toward series with mostly male main characters with their families and friends. These stories revolve around, for example, a male country doctor, a male teacher, a male hotel owner or a female antique dealer. The protagonists' career guarantees changing contacts in the world in independent episodes, while their private life provides continuity for the series. "The Country Doctor" cares for different patients with each episode, yet—unlike the American doctor series "Marcus Welby, M.D."²⁵—his family plays an important role in the narrative.

"Wataru Seken wa Onibakari" (There are only Bad People in the World), a multi-episode program that was broadcast by TBS in 1991, is similar to the German family series. Daily conflicts among several generations are played out in long, dialogue-oriented sequences. The main family and their friends and relatives create the plot. Not every problem can be solved immediately, and not every narrative strand returns to harmony.

These few family series on Japanese television are surrounded by the crime series already mentioned as well as a number of other genres, some of them unknown in Germany. Sitcoms, dominant in America, are little represented in both countries, but the Japanese *manzai* form a particular type of comedy with a kind of humor distinct from both the American and the few German representatives of the genre. Next to this light entertainment, the German viewer reacts to the large number of historically oriented series with amazement.

(5) Sword and Honor:

Historical Series in Japanese Programming

Not without pride, NHK refers in its publication to the extraordinary success of its morning short story and the weekly historical series: "These programs are so regularly watched that they seem to have become part of the daily routine for much of the population."²⁶ Both broadcasting form are extraordinary successes for Japan's public broadcaster: "NHK's dramas consistently emphasize both emotional depth and high entertainment value, so they have been

25 ABC 1969–1976

26 NHK Factsheet no. 3 1991

enjoying a wide following. Particularly popular are the weekly 45-minute historical drama series, featuring outstanding figures in Japanese history (...) and the 15-minute TV serial based on the lives of ordinary Japanese".²⁷ In addition to the television novel and the historical dramas broadcast by NHK, a third form in historical costume is the samurai series, which is offered by private stations.

The "Japanes clock" runs on the television screen on workdays. The morning novel is considered "a handy way of checking time",²⁸ for the time is continually displayed during the story. The number of viewers who tune in to the program is high even for television novels that are considered weak, and its progress is a topic of conversation, at least among housewives. Yet even Japanese who have long since gone to the office by the time the novela is shown are informed.²⁹ In 1964, the fourth novela already reached 30% of the viewers, and in 1983 the number of viewers who tuned in to "Oshin" was as high as 60%.

In 1961, NHK introduced this popular type of broadcast as an inexpensively produced studio production. At first, each episode was twenty minutes in length, broadcast six days a week from 8:40 to 9:00 a.m. In its second year, the current broadcasting time was established; the broadcast begins at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 8:30 a.m. with a preview of the continuation on the following day. The first novelas lasted a year; in the early 1970's, however, there was a change to a half-year cycle with approximately 156 episodes, a total time of 39 narrative hours.³⁰

Like the Brazilian *telenovela*, the morning novel consists of many episodes and constitutes a story with a beginning and end³¹—unlike the American soap opera, which is conceived as potentially endless. What the morning novel does have in common with the soap opera is broadcast time and target audience. The Brazilian telenovela is evening entertainment, while the soap opera and the morning novel accompany the housewife's workday. The episodes are short, the narrative tempo is slow, and a narrative voice provides commentary which even allows the viewer to move away from the screen.³² Thus, both the morning novel and the soap opera are conceived of as a secondary activity which can be undertaken while doing housework.

27 NHK Factsheet no. 3 1991

28 Ritchie 1991

29 cf. Shimamura 1984

30 One exception is "Oshin", which ran for an entire year in 1983.

31 cf. Klagsbrunn 1987

32 The title links, which are frequently inserted and require that viewer remain in front of the screen, are less informational than stylistic. They serve to strengthen the character of the saga, which is conveyed primarily by the continual narrative voice.

In content and style, the morning novels resemble the South American novelas—not the current telenovela of Brazilian prime time, but the historical narrative such as "Sinha Moça, Daughter of the Slaveholder", a telenovela which was also shown during the afternoon on German television. In Brazil as well as in Japan, the method of production is simple. The individual episodes are filmed in the studio quickly but, for this production pace, cleanly.

The stories which are narrated in this manner have become established in the course of 30 years of broadcasting experience. The morning novels are in-house programs produced alternately by NHK Osaka and NHK Tokyo.³³ The change of producers is accompanied by a slight thematic change: NHK Osaka narrates stories from the western area of Japan, using for example other dialects than those used in novelas of NHK Tokyo, which take place in the east.

Both branches, however, follow a common narrative pattern in their morning novels. While families still played a central role in the years 1961–1963, the fourth, very successful novela established a female main character. Due to the long time lag between production and broadcasting, the success of this series could not be evaluated before production of the fifth novela, so that the female protagonist did not finally gain acceptance until 1966, with the sixth novela. Isamu Onoda's "Ohanahan" was the breakthrough for the novela as a national phenomenon.

In this novela, a simple woman of humble birth plays a central role. Her life story became a model, and the novelas continue to report, often from a historical perspective, the hard life of the respective protagonist, to depict her misfortunes and stress her self-sacrifice.

New roles for women were created in the mid-1970's. The seventeenth novela depicts the life of the first female Japanese pilot, while the eighteenth records the fate of a female singer. "Hane Konma" ("Mincing Pony"—i.e., a free spirit) deals with the life of the first female journalist, and "Inochi" ("Life") tells the story of a female doctor after World War II. Women with careers are depicted now in the novelas, but their career is merely—as NHK producer Doihara commented in an interview—"the icing on the cake". As before, the theme is still her love life and family.

After several experiments,³⁴ this concept—and, with it, the basic story—was confirmed above all by the most popular of all morning novels, "Oshin".³⁵ This novela is the only Japanese series to have achieved international recognition, and it ran in 26 countries, sometimes with considerable success—for example, in Indonesia and Iran. "Oshin" also depicts the life of a Japanese woman of the lowliest birth, from her childhood at the beginning of the century to

33 Since 1975, this responsibility has alternated on a six-month cycle.

34 This concept was confirmed by experiments which failed, such as the unsuccessful 32nd novela (with a male hero) and 33rd novela (with a family theme).

35 cf. NHK 1991b

her old age. Hard-won professional advancement and unfulfilled love are the narrative supports of this story, accompanied by repeated misfortunes for Oshin.

The morning novel does not, however, attempt to present new stories or unexpected turns of events. The plot of "Kimi no Na Wa" ("What is Your Name?"), the novela of the summer of 1991, is known by even younger Japanese men and women for the film footage from 1953 which is well known in Japan.³⁶ This greatest commercial success of Japanese post-war film was based on an already popular radio series,³⁷ and the television version naturally follows the familiar story.

The story depicts the fate of a young Japanese woman who meets a man during an air raid. Standing on a bridge, they promise to meet again after the war, but they forget to exchange names. After years of waiting, an unsuccessful marriage and many misfortunes, the two lovers meet again—on the bridge.

While the morning novel thus depicts the life and suffering of a simple Japanese woman, the second successful, historically oriented series deals with great people in Japanese history, showing almost exclusively male sovereigns. Just as the novela is associated with the workday morning, so is Sunday evening tied to the historical saga on NHK.

NHK's trademark, the historical saga, broadcast throughout the country every Sunday since 1963, is produced at great expense in its in-house studios. This form of "history" narrative is well received in Japan; up to 50% of Japanese households watch such series in peak times. With each year-long saga, a chapter from Japanese history is shown from 8:00 p.m. to 8:54 p.m., focusing on a prominent historical figure. The seriousness of the undertaking is reflected in both the broadcasting time and the absence of commercial breaks.

For example, in 1991 viewers followed the fate of the "Taiheiki". The opening shows its marching troops in splendid uniforms, as well as natural forces, fire and floods. From this point forward, the saga alternates between action and dialogue. Almost austere studio scenes stand in contrast to the choreographed masses of the colorful battle scenes. History is offered here in theatrical manner with a prominent cast. Plot and resolution are reminiscent of a stage production with long passages of dialogue. While the morning novel employs great feeling, the historical saga works with great gestures. Actors not only play their roles; they simultaneously enact the significance of those roles.

According to the studio, every effort is made in the production to be faithful to history, including with costumes and decor. In many scenes, the sets are actually on a par with those of feature films. Yet it is less the accuracy of facts that impresses than the opulence of outdoor filming. Battle scenes are staged with great array.

36 "Kimi no Na wa" ("What is Your Name?"/producer: Hideo Oba/Japan, 1953

37 Anderson/Ritchie 1959, 261; Yamane 1985, 34

As with the morning novel, the narrative structure is based on several parts. The story is brought to an end in 50 segments. This narrative structure, the magnificence of the costumes, the prominent cast, the great plot and, naturally, the budget distinguish the saga from a television genre that at first glance shows similarities. The sword fight, without which the saga is unthinkable, has its place with private stations as well.

For more than 20 years, TBS has broadcast a series which has been able to maintain its prime time place. Every Monday from 8:00 to 8:54 p.m., the grandfatherly "Mito Komon" battles injustice with his loyal followers. At the same broadcasting time on Wednesdays, "Zenigata Heiji" appears on Fuji, and on Saturdays "Abarenbo Shogun" fights for justice beginning at eight on ASHAI. The three heroes—after whom the series are named—are the protagonists of the ever popular samurai series, a spin-off of the Japanese samurai film.³⁸

The structure of these productions is that of a serial broadcast, for each episode is independent and the number of parts is potentially endless. Within the 45 minutes of pure narrative, the picaresque hero arrives with his followers in a village and is confronted with an injustice which he knows how to avert. Even if the dialogue and the development of interpersonal relationships dominate in term of time, armed combat in the name of good plays the decisive role. As in American western series, special weapons or tricks distinguish the hero from other combatants. Sword fights, in which the main character excels against several attackers, provide a rhythm to the progress of the episodes. This very schematic course makes the broadcast easily accessible even to those who do not know the language. Good and bad are characterized in an exaggerated manner. The worth of the hero corresponds to the baseness of the villain.

There are also no surprising turns of events in these series. According to Mr. Taguchi of Toei AG, which produces the series "Mito Komon", virtually nothing has changed in the decades of broadcasting the program. The number of sponsors and their combination have naturally varied in the course of the decades, yet the method of production is almost entirely unchanged. To be sure, filming is done now with video,³⁹ so that the speed of production has increased, but one still must calculate a work week for each episode. Today, a producer oversees two episodes simultaneously in 10 days.

The only change has been in the main actor, who was replaced twice for reasons of age; but since the exceptional mask—a white pointed beard—and the identical costume guarantees easy recognition, this change remained unproblematic. In the course of the years, only the personnel has been expanded to allow greater variation. In the beginning, "Mito Komon" traveled through the country with only two helpers; now he is supported by six followers. In

38 cf. Oyama 1991

39 Some producers do, however, still, prefer 16 mm.

order to make erotic situations possible, one of these followers is a woman who is shown not only in battle but also often while bathing. A scene with her bare shoulders, like the sword fights, is a standard situation.

As with any series, the author of a new episode is not allowed to change the characterization and constellation of the cast. There is no time for an extensive exposition. The conflict must be developed and the first battle scene must arise quickly and clearly. Three advertising blocks provide the suspense curve, and an episode concludes with a happy ending and a closing joke. This tight framework is not unusual, for almost even American serial, be it "Bonanza" or "Star Trek", follows the same principle. The samurai series have both uniformity and filming location in common with the U.S. series of the 1960's. Episodes are produced almost exclusively in the studio, not in original settings.

This method of production saves money, but it also informs the aesthetic of a series. In the series, the sets are always recognizable as such, for there is neither time nor money for costly construction. The artificiality which necessarily arises is compounded by the masks and costumes. The edges of wigs are generally recognizable, and one can always tell that the costumes belong to the studio wardrobe. Yet this inexpensive method of production does not detract from the samurai series, for they are in any event somewhat fairytale-like and make no claims to historical authenticity. The samurai series of private broadcasting stations are professional, i.e. serially produced entertainment. As such, they cannot be compared with historical television plays or with feature films, but rather with other inexpensive serial broadcasts. For the producers, the only measure is the success with viewers. Although the samurai series as a whole are having a problem with a decreasing number of viewers, a few of the long-standing series are enjoying continued popularity. The number of viewers tuning in to the oldest samurai series on Japanese television is impressive with respect to the prime time competition. *Toei AG* records a weekly viewing audience of 25–30% for "Mito Komon".

The samurai series, the morning novel and historical saga can look back on a long television tradition. They have held a solid and secure place in programming for decades. Switching from TBS to Fuji after "Mito Komon", a viewer finds a serial form that presents modern culture rather than tradition. Between 9:00 and 9:45 p.m. during the late summer of 1991, Japanese viewers could follow a love story about young people in modern Japan, "Hyaku-Ikkai no Propose" ("A Hundred and One Marriage Proposals")—a *trendy drama*.

(6) Fashion and Love: Trendy Dramas

Anyone interested in romantic love stories found a rich selection in the late summer of 1991 on Japanese television. Persistent wooing was depicted in "Hyaku-Ikkai no Propose" ("A Hundred and One Marriage Proposals") on Mondays, TBS entertained with the romantic comedy "Depato! Natsu Monogatari" ("Department store! Summer Story") on Tuesdays, viewers could follow a decision between two men on "Vingt-cinq ans, kekkon" ("Vingt-cinq

ans, Married") on Thursdays and finally, on Fridays, the romantic adventures of a group of bachelors on "Kekkon Shitai Otokotachi" ("Men who want to Marry").⁴⁰

The main characters of these series are young, professional, for the most part exceptionally well dressed Japanese men and women who are struggling with love. Even if they are still with their family of origin, their relationship to parents and siblings is secondary, for lovers, friends or rivals are the main characters. Few of the characters still live with their parents; most of them live alone or share living arrangements with others of the same sex. Accordingly, these are no longer family series; they are romantic mini-series, "trendy dramas", as Sachiko Imaizumi Kodaira of the *Broadcasting Culture Research Institute* referred to this broadcasting form in an interview.

These series are not only fashionable; they are trendsetters. "Kekkon Shitai Otokotachi" (Men who want to Marry) in particular is something of a fashion show, for the wardrobe of the bachelors in the show—right down to the pyjamas—is coordinated. The clothing and hairstyles have been imitated in daily life, and the title song has come out on CD. The haunting opening of the leitmotiv in these series makes the introductory themes stick in one's mind. In 1991, the Japanese group *Chage and Aska* led the hit parade for weeks with the title song of "Hyaku-Ikkai no Propose" ("A Hundred and One Marriage Proposals"), which, indicatively, is called "Say Yes". With every eruption of feeling in the series—i.e., up to 10 times per episode—one hears this international sound with its English refrain but Japanese text. Because of this merchandising, the introduction to trendy dramas resembles a music clip, especially since the video techniques and cut used here are borrowed from these clips.

Both these hits and the series themselves are in fashion for a short period of time. They are products planned for quick success, not long-standing but rather one-day trends. Most of the actors become known quickly but are often as quickly forgotten.⁴¹ The love story is brought to a conclusion in seldom more than 26 episodes, that is, in a narrative time of six months. In contrast to the historical series, a smaller number of episodes is preferred. In addition to the 26-week (*two cools*) and the 13-week (*one cool*) series, 5-part and 9-part series are becoming increasingly popular. As is customary with broadcast series, the narrative structure of the romances is strongly determined by this division and by the rigid time frame of the broadcasting schedule. The filmic resolution of the *trendy drama* is only seldom unusual. Occasionally, oblique angles, slow motion sequences or split images distinguish the

40	<i>Hyaku-Ikkai no Propose</i>	Fuji, Mon. 9:00–9:54 p.m.
	<i>Depato! Natsu Monogatari</i>	TBS, Tues. 8:00–8:54 p.m.
	<i>Vingt-cinq ans, kekkon</i>	Fuji, Thurs. 10:00–10:54 p.m.
	<i>Kekkon Shitai Otokotachi</i>	TBS, Fri. 10:00–10:54 p.m.

41 The exceptions are proven television favorites which maintain their popularity with (but do not base it on) such a story.

Japanese productions from the American or the German. Yet neither these effects nor the preference for shifting the focus during dialogue can be termed a national characteristic, since the internationally customary resolution in shot and countershot is also dominant in Japanese series. In spite of this conventionality and short life, the fashionable mini-series deserve attention. While crime series are so standardized across countries that it has become almost impossible to distinguish between the individual countries, these light romances are unique for their (at least for German viewers) unusual story line. While the samurai series presents the hero, these love stories celebrate a male image that has little in common with the armed champion of good.

In his analysis of Japanese male roles in film, Tadao Sato distinguishes two types, the origins of which he finds in the kabuki theater.⁴² The male heroes are in the tradition of the *tateyaku*, the main role of the idealized samurai, or in the tradition of the *nimaime*, the emotional secondary character. While the *tateyaku* subordinates love to his code of honor, the deeds of the *nimaime* are determined by love for a woman. In the purest embodiment, this secondary character appears in the kabuki theater as *tsukkorogashi*, a man at the mercy of love who often meets his end in suicide together with his loved one.

If the hierarchy of the figures remains constant throughout the transition from theater to film,—Matsunosuke Onoe, the first Japanese film star, played the type of the *tateyaku*,—the popular love films require a male main character who must be in a position to express feelings. The sad ending to a love relationship, while not necessarily ending in death, expanded in film to a genre known in Japan as *sure chigai*: Love remains unfulfilled, and the lovers "pass each other by". "Kimi No Na wa" ("What is your Name?") is the prototype of such a *sure chigai*. This is a formulation of the interest in tragic love and suffering, and the protagonists are women who sacrifice themselves. In addition to the tragic ending and the acceptance of fate, the weakness of the male lover is characteristic of this genre.

The relationship between the two types of men is apparent in film and is continued in the television series. "In spite of repeated attempts, from the 1930s to the 1950s, to produce a hero who synthesized the *tateyaku* and the *nimaime* as in the American films, the popularity of television only served to perpetuate this division."⁴³ We find the trivialized form of the *tateyaku* in the samurai series; the romantic mini-series offer a variation of the *nimaime* and even the *tsukkorogashi*. The tragic ending is, however, no longer possible in this form, for the story leads the lovers to marriage instead of suicide.

The couple in "Hyaku-Ikkaime no Propose" ("A Hundred and One Marriage Proposals") corresponds exactly to the scheme set up by Sato. A young widowed cellist is wooed by a man to the point of surrender. After 13 episodes of misunderstandings, she finally decides to

accept his proposal, since she is now certain that she loves him. The profile of the hero is surprising if one considers the desirable characteristics of a Japanese marriage candidate. The ideal Japanese fiancé should be of an imposing height, have a degree from a respectable university and a good income. The timid protagonist of the series is not only advanced in age but also short and has just lost his job, so that he has to hire out as a construction worker. His fall from white collar to blue collar worker, his humiliation and his refusal to give up are the theme of "Hyaku-Ikkaime no Propose". Consequently, his tragic part often becomes a ridiculous, comic role, a type which is generally characterized in Japanese television by means of exaggerated acting.⁴⁴

The heroine of the story not only refuses his proposals; she also apparently suffers due to the situation. Yet while he shouts, cries and raves, her emotions take only one form. Tears are her only manner of expression, and she cries up to 11 times each episode. Her emotions are displayed rather than experienced. She plays her part with decidedly little, indeed almost no movement,⁴⁵ tilts her head to the side, smiles slightly or cries, sometimes both at once, as with tears of joy.

When the two meet, the result is consequently a chain of misunderstandings, tears and disappointments. In contrast to a series such as "Kekkon Shitai Otokotachi", in which sexuality also plays an important role, both characters behave in a timid and chaste manner. The lovers generally stand facing each other, either crying or smiling; only in exceptional cases are feelings about touching articulated. In these emotional passages, the music acquires special significance. The quality of the title music "Say Yes" and the leitmotiv of the protagonist is reflected precisely in the repeated introduction. The music always seems to express precisely the feelings of those involved.

Love is expressed in the music, by means of symbols or with great gestures. In "Hyaku-Ikkaime no Propose", an engagement ring becomes the symbol of the protagonist's futile wooing, and a Christian church becomes the mythical place. In the last episode, when he can no longer believe in common happiness, he throws the engagement ring into the sea. She reconsiders during a concert, stands up during the final applause and runs through the rows of the audience to the exit. At the same time, he is sitting alone at the construction site, his work finished, when he perceives a figure running at the end of the street. On the night highway, she runs toward him—in a white wedding dress. This great gesture is followed by the resolution of the symbol developed in the thirteen preceding episodes. Since the ring is now lost, the tearful bride picks up a machine nut from the street which the bridegroom places on her finger.

42 Sato 1982, 15–30

43 Sato 1982, 37

44 "Depato! Natsu Monogatari", a romantic comedy, exists on very simple running gags in the form of slapstick.

45 cf. Sato 1982, 88

With the same timid smile, the main actor reappears on the screen a few minutes after the final kiss, this time in a different function. He is wooing again, but this time not for a wife. Now he is wooing customers for the beer *Asahi*. This interweaving of a serial role with advertising is not unusual in Japan and is also found in Germany. With a sonorous voice, the actor who plays the role of a doctor advertises for an especially mild coffee, while his spouse in the series talks of the advantages of a toy for small children and even offers advice on the topic. As in Japan, attributes of the role (such as medical competence) are utilized here for the purpose of advertising.

Despite familiarity with the product, this advertising remains limited to the native country of the advertiser. Unlike film stars, television stars can only be marketed within the borders of their homeland. For emcees, newscasters and sports reporters, language barriers cannot be overcome by means of synchronization; with dubbing, free speaking loses all of its effectiveness. In contrast to the interviews of moderators, the conversations of series characters are accepted in translation. J.R.'s malicious comments work in Japanese and German as well. This international familiarity which allows J.R. to advertise for German milk products is hardly achievable for a non-American hero of a series. While "Dallas" was broadcast almost world-wide with great success, the sales of German serials on the world market have remained rare occurrences. Finally, despite the professional nature of their production, Japanese series are hardly exportable.

(7) Export and Leveling: The Series as Export Item

The television equipment with which German viewers watch their programming is seldom produced in Germany. "It's a SONY" is probably the best known advertising slogan in Europe in the field of entertainment electronics. Thus, Japanese manufacturers export television sets and video recorders throughout the world with enormous success; the software, however, is provided by others.⁴⁶ Neither Japanese feature films nor Japanese television series reach our television sets and video players.

The CD players manufactured in Japan also play no Japanese hits outside of Nippon. The German consumer has no reason to be amazed by this national limitation, since the successful sales in music in Germany are of American origin, despite the lively native production. A number one hit in German is a sensation.

In contrast to Germany, the national music production in Japan is competitive; with all the admiration for Madonna or Michael Jackson, Japanese products outweigh all others in the large CD stores and the hit parades are dominated by Japanese bands. When one listens to their recordings, however, one is reminded by almost all the titles on the pop charts of successful

international bands. Both rap and heavy metal are represented, albeit in modified hit version. As a result of such modification, many pieces resemble what is offered by the *Grand Prix d'Eurovision de la Chanson*. The national music production is thus oriented entirely to international standards, but it is modified for the Japanese CD buyer, both linguistically and musically.

Japan's television series also work on this principle. Despite the similarity of Japanese music and series to their American prototypes, the export of these Japanese products remains problematic. The fact that they are aimed at their native audience prevents their sale to other countries beyond the language boundaries. A national imitation cannot achieve the internationality of the original. The Japanese or German versions of the hamburger can, to be sure, thrive in their own country, yet the sale of the modified product back to the country of origin or to other lands is possible only as an outsider product. The sale of Japanese series to the U.S. would exceed the ambitions of such an undertaking.

In Germany, the quantitative advantage of American series will last despite the growing production at home. Latin American telenovelas will play only a secondary role now, and the series of European neighbors will be scarcely significant. Successful exporting is unlikely for Japanese series.

This prognosis is tied not only to the narration, for the protagonists of Japanese series are difficult to distinguish for the German inexperienced in the differentiation of Asian faces. A typifying synchronization could, of course, provide the necessary orientation. By contrast, the historical broadcast series have used costumes and masks to create this overview from the beginning. Precisely because of their simplicity, the inexpensive samurai series are of interest for export. The images are colorful and the plot is action-packed. Viewers for a broadcast series set in historic Japan could also be found in Germany in the children's programming of private stations. The clear similarity between samurai adventures and westerns and their historical distance also obscure cultural differences which would create irritation when exporting series targeting adult audiences.

As much as they may have approached western customs, Japanese traditions remain confusing for the German viewer. Cultural differences such as eating habits and furniture, considered charming in a feature film, are disconcerting on television. Television viewers seek what is familiar; they are looking for entertainment, not adventure. Since people generally watch television while doing something else, series can take no time for explaining the daily life of the protagonist. Consequently, cultural differences continue to be novelties that can scarcely be gotten used to, and the Japanese series could at best become a camp secret during nighttime programming.

With the confirmed lack of success in exporting and the characterization of individual differences, the thesis of worldwide leveling of television is differentiated but not eliminated. Despite all the Japanese elements, despite all the peculiarities described here, the similarity of

46 Even if, in the meantime, Japanese producers actually finance these products.

the products is still strong and the differences remain superficial. The Japanese television series resemble international productions and are strongly oriented to them. Nevertheless, they are not indiscriminately interchangeable.

The basically uniform world television that offers in all countries the same types of broadcasts or advertises the same products needs native types of acting. Unlike cinema, television requires national production. The practiced television viewer who turns on the television in an foreign country will hardly experience culture shock. There will, however, be many new discoveries for that viewer.

(8) Abbreviations

ABC	American Broadcasting Corporation
ARD	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten Deutschlands (Association of German Public Media Stations)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting Corporation
JABA	Japanese Association of Broadcasting Art
NBC	National Broadcasting Corporation
NHK	Nippon Hoso Kyokai
NTSC	National Television System Committee
RAL	Phase Alternation Line
RTLplus	Radio Télé Luxembourg
TBS	Tokyo Broadcasting System
ZDF	Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (Second German Television)

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アンペール奨学金外国人研究者・活動記録報告

外国人研究者 Carl H. Johnson
共同研究者 三輪 五十二

記

平成4年

- 6月27日 成田着
- 6月30日 岡崎国立基礎生物学研究所にて、ゾウリムシの集光性概日リズムに対する光の波長スペクトラムの研究を行なう。
- 7月8日 茨城大学にて、接合活性リズムの物質的基礎をえるため接合型物質を電気泳動で分離することを試みる。
- 7月28日 教養部第一会議室で講演会を行なう。
演題:「人間と単細胞生物のサーカディアンリズム」
- 8月1日 岡崎基礎生物学研究所にて、集光性リズムに対する光の影響についての研究を行なう。
- 8月12日 岡山大学理学部中島研究室にて、単細胞生物の生物時計に関する研究打ち合わせを行なう。
- 8月18日 成田発

成果

1. ゾウリムシの集光性リズムに対する効果的な光波長がわかり、集光性の機構を考察することができた。
2. ゾウリムシの接合型物質を分離するため、昼細胞と夜細胞、未熟細胞と成熟細胞をビオチンでラベルしておき、それぞれの細胞の纖毛だけを分離する。その纖毛をSDS電気泳動にかけ、それぞれの細胞の違いを比較した。顕著な差はまだ認められなかったが、電気泳動法の技術を習得できたので今後の展開が期待できる。
3. 講演会は約30名ほどの出席者があり、人間と単細胞生物のサーカディアンリズムの話であったが、特に人間の場合は身近な現象の話であったので興味をもたれた。
4. 研究室では、学生たちとのコミュニケーションもうまくいき、お互いに得るところが大きかった。