(In)Visible Difference: Mixed Race Subjectivity in Post-Occupation Japanese Cinema (1952-1960)

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Abstract

Post-war contact with American soldiers in Japan led to a growth in the mixed-race Japanese population, coinciding with ideological shifts in the social perception of "Japaneseness". The growing visibility and demographic of mixed-race Occupation babies called into questioned ideals of beauty, racial purity, and social cohesion — formerly key talking points of wartime nationalism. Film, as an artistic and popular medium, has the power to reflect contemporaneous ideologies as expressed in art, but can also demonstrate how audiences are recruited to feel or think about a social issue. Under the Occupation, mixed-race Japanese individuals were consciously excluded from visual representation; only after 1952 did mixed-race Japanese individuals return to the silver screen, their bodies now carrying a new ideological weight. Performing a semiotic film analysis of *Kurutta Kajitsu*/*Crazed Fruit* (1956) and *Kiku to Isamu*/*Kiku and Isamu* (1959), this article evaluates how mixed-race subjectivity was constituted in these two films in the 1950s after the end of Occupation censorship. Despite varying approaches to representing mixed-race characters, the analysis of these films ultimately reveals that they retain Othered status to varying degrees in Japanese society, their visible difference tied to a worth reduced to fetish object if white-Japanese or to negative inherent traits if Black-Japanese. Not only do these negative representations affect the self-recognition of mixed-race Japanese in this time period, but they also serve to instruct wider audiences in how to feel about and act towards mixed-race Japanese individuals.

Introduction

From the very first report of a half Japanese half American child being born, mixed race children in Occupied Japan were paradoxically made invisible by official narratives while physically being marked as different. Between 1945-1952, American Armed Forces occupied Japan, building bases and directing government policy. One such policy of control by the General Headquarters' (GHQ) over media production prohibited criticisms of the Occupation and explicitly forbade depictions of children born from American fathers and Japanese mothers.(1) Statistical investigations of this phenomenon were forbidden by the Supreme Commander for Allied Powers (SCAP),(2) and the GHQ ordered that the radio announcer who broadcast the news of the first Occupation baby be fired.(3) Mikiyo Kano notes that these policies explicitly excluded mixed-race children from official and popular narrative representations,(4) effectively making them 'unseen' subjects. After 1952, control of the media reverted to the Japanese government, and it took less than a year for serialized books, manga, and movies about mixed race children to start circulating.

Film as a medium projects both the narrative and actual image of mixed-race children. Analysis of this post-war

(1) Kyoko Hirano, "Prohibited Subjects," in *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo: Under the American Occupation, 1945-1952* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 58.

(2) Mika Ko, "Representations of 'Mixed-Race' Children in Japanese Cinema from the 1950s to the 1970s," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 35, no. 6 (November 2014): 629.

(3) Mikiyo Kano, "「混血児」問題と単一民族神話の生成 ['Konketsuji' Mondai to Tan'itsuminzoku Shinwa No Seisei]," in *占領と性：政策・実態・表象 [Senryō to Sei: Seisaku, Jittai, Hyōshō]*, ed. Keisen Jogakuen Heiwa Kenkyūjo (Tokyo: Inpakuto Shuppankai, 2007), 219.

(4) Kano, "「混血児」問題と単一民族神話の生成" 219.

phenomenon is important to understanding the conceptions of race, representation, and 'Japanese-ness'. This study combines a Historical and Film Studies approach to two movies produced in 1950s Japan about or featuring mixed-race characters to analyse how race, class, and gender add nuance to the subject these films construct. To contextualize the films under investigation the paper begins with a literature review on the Japanese construction of race in the postwar era, including a survey of the historical reality of mixed-race Japanese and the conflicting social reaction to the presence of mixed-race people. A semiotic textual analysis of *Crazed Fruit* (*Kurutta Kajitsu*, 1956), featuring a half-white character, and *Kiku and Isamu* (*Kiku to Isamu*, 1959) focusing on two half-Black characters will then be examined. The 'mixed-race' problem, as it came to be known in the '50s and '60s, pertained only to the children of American military men and Japanese women; children of foreign mothers or non-Japanese Asian fathers were not included in official surveys or definitions of mixed-race(5). The race of the American father created a range of Othered positions for their mixed-race children that goes beyond a simple foreign vs. Japanese dichotomy. Based on the historical paradigm that positioned American-Japanese children at the forefront of mixed-race discourse in Japan, this project will focus only on the representation of children of American father-Japanese mother couples.

Construction of Race in Japan

The perception of one's race has historically impacted rights, laws, and social attitudes. Rather than a concrete reality, race itself is a pseudoscientific schema that is historically constructed.(6) However, race tangibly impacts reality and for the purpose of this paper race will be understood as referring to physical and genetic characteristics; with some allowance for how historically cultural characteristics were also used to define race, while ethnicity will be understood as mainly referring to those cultural and social characteristics.(7) Michelle H. S. Ho uses Peggy McIntosh's definition of white privilege – "an invisible package of unearned assets"(8) – to describe the positionality of *jun-nihonjin* or 'pure Japanese' in relation to ethnic minorities. Ho argues that "*Jun-nihonjin*, by virtue of having lighter skin tone and two "pure" Japanese parents, are regarded as invisible and "normal," whereas all other individuals… are often visible and treated differently."(9) This 'invisibility' is constructed as normal and thus not notable in contrast to ethnic difference. As Jean S. Phinney argues, ethnic identity as a point of difference is only meaningful in the presence of another ethnic group;(10) historically, encounters with other non-Asian ethnic groups were not commonplace within Japan. With most ethnically different groups coming from outside the nation, 'mixedness' and 'foreign-ness' become conflated, and both groups are categorized as outsiders.(11) Under such conditions, "audiences are not taught to read multiracial figures onscreen".(12) The post-war images of mixed-race children are then foreign on both a racial level, and as elements of film. Defining what it is to be Japanese and what it is to be foreign becomes a pressing issue not only for mixed-race children, but the society around them that must learn how to acclimate to their growing presence in a distinctly postwar context. This process of negotiation began with discourses on 'Japaneseness' or *nihonjinron*.

The study of *nihonjinron* (lit. 'discourse on Japaneseness') has historically been used within Japan to define

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(5) Hyoue Okamura, "The Language of 'Racial Mixture': How Ainoko Became Haafu, and the Haafu-Gao Makeup Fad," *Asia Pacific Perspectives* 14, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 48.

(6) John G. Russell, *日本人の黒人観：問題は「ちびくろサンボ」だけではない [Nihonjin No Kokujin-Kan: Mondai Wa "Chibikuro Sanbo" Dakedewanai]* (Tokyo: 新評論 [Shinhyōron], 1991), i.

(7) Russell, *日本人の黒人観*, i.

(8) Peggy. McIntosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies," in *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*, ed. Margaret L Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins, Working Paper / Wellesley College, Center for Research on Women; No. 189 (Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 1988), 94–95.

(9) Michelle H. S. Ho, "Looking Japanese: Representing Gender, Privilege, and Multiracial Beauty Queens in the Media," *Feminist Media Studies*, July 5, 2023, 3, https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2023.2231657.

(10) Zarine L Rocha, "Re-Viewing Race and Mixedness: Mixed Race in Asia and the Pacific," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 39, no. 4 (July 4, 2018): 518, https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2018.1486291.

(11) Rocha, "Re-Viewing Race and Mixedness 519.

(12) Ji-Hyun Ahn, "Mixed-Race: From Pathology to Celebration," in *The Routledge Companion to Media and Race*, ed. Christopher Campbell (New York: Routledge, 2016), 250.

Japanese identity as part of larger nationalist discourses. The kind of *nihonjinron* changes based on the socio-cultural demands of a period and "operates as an ideological apparatus to create the desirable Japanese".[13] The ideological shifts of World War II evolved how Japanese uniqueness was thought about, at times rejecting and reaffirming the importance of blood purity as related by the concept of Meiji *kokutai* (lit. national body). During World War II, the idea of *kokutai* and the primacy of the emperor as head of the national family was weaponized for nationalistic purposes. The *nihonjinron* of the war-time period evolved to focus not on the purity of the national bloodline, but the supremacy of that bloodline to assimilate and elevate 'baser' races such as the colonized Koreans and Taiwanese.[14] In the aftermath of defeat, the study of *nihonjinron* turned to the myth of racial homogeneity as a marker of uniqueness, claiming that Japan was descended from a single race of peaceful farmers.[15] This monoracial reimagination also conceptualized the nation as largely middle-class. Harumi Befu argues that in the post-war, *nihonjinron* discourse as a method of defining Japanese identity came to prominence because of the 'symbolic vacuum'; *nihonjinron* did not have the tainted association other symbols of nation had acquired through the war.[16] In a way, by embracing *nihonjinron* as the method to define national identity, the failures of wartime Japan could metaphorically be left behind. Initially, this idea of linking back generations to a fundamentally peaceful people was championed by leftists as an antidote to wartime militarism but this explanation for Japanese ethnogenesis was eventually co-opted by conservative reactionaries who instead saw it as criteria for exclusion.[17] Blood then, became the ideological locus of post-war political struggle to define who was 'Japanese', echoing the pre-war *nihonjinron* axiom.

Blood as a signifier of purity or race is an ideologically loaded symbol, not only as a criterion of race, but for the nationalist rhetoric in defining the nation against all others through genetic connection. Kosaku Yoshino argues that "the 'quasi-racial' symbol of 'Japanese blood' strengthens ethnic identity" by exaggerating kinship ties, a connection invented to provoke a psychological response to the 'Other'.[18] These kinship ties are assumptive of reproduction and imply a level of 'blood purity'.[19] Homogeneity is assumed of those within the Japanese 'family', while heterogeneity is assumed as characteristic of non-Japanese. In post-war Japan, *nihonjinron* created a narrative of homogeneity that positions ethnicity, culture, and nationality as interchangeable, creating an ethnic/national dichotomy of 'Japanese' vs. foreigner.[20] The dualism of Japanese versus foreigner does not easily account for the reality of mixed-race Japanese.

Locating one's social position in relation to *uchi/soto* (in/out) groups has a long history in Japanese cultural tradition, however the criteria for who belongs to which grouping is historically contingent, and for mixed-race Japanese, quite ambiguous. Historically, Shinto ideas of purity and pollution have determined forms of exclusion coding the ideas of who belongs to *uchi*, i.e., Japanese or 'pure', and *soto*, i.e., non-Japanese or 'polluted'.[21] The reliance on in-group/out-group classification not only for individual identity but also for national identity is reminiscent of Homi Bhabha's concept of the 'Other', a figure that operates as a point of comparison, definition of oneself by understanding what one is not.[22] The word for 'foreigner' in Japanese is *gaijin/gaikokujin* (外人・外国人) meaning 'outside person' or 'person from an outside country', cementing the place of foreigners firmly in the *soto* group and as the Other for the Japanese. Even within this *soto* group, there is a racioethnic hierarchy with white foreigners

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⑬ Mika Ko, *Japanese Cinema and Otherness: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and the Problem of Japaneseness* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 17.

⑭ Ko, *Japanese Cinema and Otherness*, 13-14

⑮ Ko, *Japanese Cinema and Otherness*, 14.

⑯ Harumi Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of Nihonjinron*, Japanese Society Series (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2001), 129.

⑰ Ko, *Japanese Cinema and Otherness*, 14.

⑱ Kosaku Yoshino, "Perceptions of Japanese Uniqueness Among Educators and Businessmen," in *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan: A Sociological Inquiry* (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 1992), 120.

⑲ Yoshino, "Perceptions of Japanese Uniqueness," 120.

⑳ Rocha, "Re-Viewing Race and Mixedness," 512.

㉑ Ho, "Looking Japanese," 3.

㉒ Homi K. Bhabha, "Introduction: Narrating the Nation," in *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 4.

typically referred to as *gaijin* as the 'pure/true' foreigner, and *gaikokujin* referring to Black or non-Japanese Asians.[23] These conceptions of ranked 'foreignness' are applied to mixed-race Japanese depending on what their non-Japanese heritage is. Foreignness, specifically white foreignness, is exoticized and eroticized in mixed-race Japanese, replicating the racial hierarchy of foreigners within mixed-race populations.

It has been argued that this form of anti-Blackness originates from a history of linking the colour white to purity and positive qualities and the colour black to impurity and ugliness in the context of indigenous religion.[24] However, John G. Russell has traced a history of racial theorization imported from the West, particularly after the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1852.[25] The push for modernization along a Westernized paradigm by intellectuals such as Fukuzawa Yukichi promulgated a racial hierarchy with whiteness at the top, Yellow peoples (including the Japanese) in the middle, and Black peoples at the bottom.[26] In the postwar, anti-Black prejudice was exacerbated by American attitudes.[27] Clearly, then, to be Black-Japanese and to be white-Japanese are two very different subjectivities in post-war Japan that experience the rejection of being considered 'foreign' in different ways. In Japan, 'mixedness' and 'foreignness' are conflated, and both are seen as out of place in society.[28] Yet at the same time, based on their possession of Japanese blood, mixed-race people also belong to the *uchi* in-group because of their Japanese heritage. Millie Creighton has dubbed the ambivalent position of Japanese minorities, including mixed-race Japanese, as the "*uchi* Others" (inside Others) that do not occupy the space of foreigners – not us – but rather the position of "not quite us".[29] The concept of the *uchi* Other nominally preserves the *uchi/soto* dichotomy while still eliding the challenges to Japanese homogeneity.

The image of Japanese homogeneity has always had social and political capital in determining Japanese national identity, but in the post-war the concept grew to encapsulate greater cultural significance. Oguma Eiji observes the myth of racial homogeneity is a dominant and recurring part of the self-image of the Japanese.[30] Visual culture reaffirms and perpetuates images of sameness as the basis for identification. Visual difference then challenges the foundations of identity, positioning the images of mixed-race and other Japanese minority groups in a precarious matrix of unconscious visibility and wilful erasure. Examining post-war attitudes, Andrew Gordon found the "concept of Japan as a homogenous and cohesive middle-class" to be a powerful ideology of the time,[31] clearly delineating the *uchi* group. The use of the Other to reaffirm the boundaries of identity can result in what Peter Dale terms "cultural exorcism", defined by William Kelly as when "internal tensions are projected onto an external and inauthentic Other".[32] The internal tensions of navigating a crisis of national identity in the wake of defeat becomes exorcised in the reaffirmation of homogeneity, no matter how inaccurate that conception of modern Japan was. Creighton's analysis of post-war visual media found that one of the repeating motifs was "to project heterogeneity onto the outside world, reaffirming Japan's self-assertion of homogeneity, while symbolically negating diversity within Japanese society".[33] The existence of mixed-race and minority groups in post-war Japan is then negated, their images now forced to bear the ideological weight of simultaneous erasure and exoticization.

Stigmatized Mothers

Historically the term used to refer to mixed-race Japanese has evolved from *ainoko* (lit. 'between child' but col-

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[23] Millie Creighton, "Soto Others and Uchi Others," in *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, ed. Michael Weiner, 1st ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 212.

[24] Hiroshi Wagatsuma, "The Social Perception of Skin Color in Japan," *Daedalus* 96, no. 2 (1967): 431.

[25] Russell, *日本人の黒人観*, 49.

[26] Russell, 49–50.

[27] Russell, 53.

[28] Rocha, "Re-Viewing Race and Mixedness," 519.

[29] Creighton, "Soto Others and Uchi Others," 214.

[30] Ko, *Japanese Cinema and Otherness*, 12.

[31] Creighton, "Soto Others and Uchi Others," 213.

[32] William W Kelly, "Finding a Place in Metropolitan Japan: Ideologies, Institutions, and Everyday Life," in *Postwar Japan as History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 194, https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520911444-010.

[33] Creighton, "Soto Others and Uchi Others," 213.

loquially understood as 'half-breed') to *konketsuji* (mixed blood child) in the post-war, to *hāfu* (half) since the 1980s. Indicated by the evolution in naming conventions, the construction of mixed-race identity in Japan has always been historically contingent. Children that were of mixed heritage in the post-war carried the double burden of not being 'pure' Japanese and the stigma of being the child of a suspected prostitute.

The Japanese Government set up the Recreation and Amusement Association (RAA) in August 1945.[34] The RAA was a legal brothel system intended to reduce rape by redirecting sexual attention to a "blockade" made from Japanese women who would sacrifice themselves for the racial purity of the nation.[35] This measure was clearly not meant to protect all Japanese women; the women predominantly recruited were lower class, leaving the middle-class women protected from the perceived threat of sexual violence and 'impurity'.[36] One of its stated goals was to "Protect and cultivate the blood purity of the nation for 100 years" (民族の純血を百年の彼方に護持培養する), indicating that the regulation of sex was not only to 'protect' certain women but to restrict sex resulting in pregnancy.[37] Class along with racial purity becomes the markers of Japaneseness in the post-war, and these women who were already marginalized based on their socio-economic status were further marginalized through their sexual contact with foreigners. In 1946, the RAA was disbanded out of concerns for venereal disease, moving legalized sex work to the streets and to rented rooms.[38] Streetwalkers were known as *panpan*, and the ones catering to American GIs specifically *yōpan*.[39] Though there was some envy over their material wealth, public commentary on *panpan* continued to be disparaging.[40] In his 1952 article, "Konketsuji wa Nihon-jin ka" published in *Ushio* magazine, Keiichi Aoki describes *yōpan* mothers as "Madame Butterflies" and admonishes them for thinking that having children with GIs would enhance their social status, when really it was harming these women and the nation.[41] The derogatory opinion voiced by Aoki makes explicit reference to the harm done to the nation by the production of mixed-race children shaming the women. Many of the mixed-race children born in the post-war were the products of *panpan*s and American soldiers or sexual assault perpetrated by soldiers, though this was not always the case.[42] Yet it was the *panpan* with her illegitimate child, red lipstick, and flashy Western clothing that was sensationalized by the press of the time and memorialized in literature.[43] To be the mother of a mixed-race child carried social repercussions, but to be a mixed-race child was to have aspersions about one's mother's character passed down to oneself as well. This made the images of mixed-race children even more ideologically threatening.

Legislating the 'Mixed-Race' Problem

The general image of mixed-race children reflected badly on Occupation forces, not only for the associations with sex work and venereal disease, but for the legal and ideological implications the act of creating these children represented. American military law only required soldiers to take responsibility for a child and its mother if the soldier wished to admit paternity, otherwise the mother as an "enemy alien" had no avenue by which to submit a court claim for paternity.[44] Children that were claimed, regardless of the marital status of their parents, were only consid-

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[34] Ko, "Representations of 'Mixed-Race' Children," 629.

[35] John Lie, "The State as Pimp: Prostitution and the Patriarchal State in Japan in the 1940s," *The Sociological Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (1997): 48.

[36] Masako Endo, "The Vestiges of the U.S. Occupation and the Redefining of the Japanese Woman," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 29, no. 4 (2016): 442, https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12096.

[37] Kano, "「混血児」問題と単一民族神話の生成," 215.

[38] Toshiyuki Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and the U.S. Occupation* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 161.

[39] Irene González-López, "Marketing the Panpan in Japanese Popular Culture: Youth, Sexuality, and Power," *U.S. - Japan Women's Journal* 54 (2018): 34.

[40] Rumi Sakamoto, "Pan-Pan Girls: Humiliating Liberation in Postwar Japanese Literature," *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 7, no. 2 (July 2010): 5–6.

[41] Yukiko Koshiro, "The Problem of Miscegenation," in *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 168.

[42] Ko, "Representations of 'Mixed-Race' Children," 629.

[43] Sakamoto, "Pan-Pan Girls: Humiliating Liberation in Postwar Japanese Literature," 6.

[44] Koshiro, "The Problem of Miscegenation," 162.

ered 'Americans' if their father registered them with the American Consulate after admitting paternity.[45] In the case that American fathers were willing to claim and raise their half-Japanese children, GHQ denied requests by GIs to bring their Japanese and mixed children to the US by weaponizing the 1924 Immigration Law which limited immigration based on national quota.[46] Even if mixed-race children were recognized by their fathers, the opportunity for dual citizenship remained precarious as long as they remained 'invisible' and 'unwanted' to official records.

On the Japanese side, the government had previously recognized Japanese citizenship through *jus sanguinis*, awarding the child nationality only if the father was a Japanese citizen at the time of the child's birth.[47] Without official recognition by an American father, these mixed-race children existed in limbo, unrecognized as a citizen of either nation. In May 1950, the Nationality Law was expanded to include Law 147, stating that a child would still be considered a Japanese national if the father was unknown but the mother a Japanese national, or if both parents were unknown but the child was born in Japan.[48] Registering children as part of a family registry was key to acquiring citizenship, and reinforced the concept of kinship that post-war *nihonjinron* was so heavily centred around. The Japanese government estimated that in 1952, 20-30% of mixed-race children were not registered in the family registry system and were thus not considered Japanese citizens.[49] Lack of official visibility correlated to a lack of recognized identity for mixed-race children, an issue that would continue to pervade official policies.

As Yukiko Koshiro points out, the issue of miscegenation threatened the purity of the white race for the Americans and the sanctity of the 'homogenous' Japanese race for the Japanese, uniting the two governments in their distaste for mixed-race children.[50] Notably interracial marriage was not legal in America until well after the end of Occupation. In 1948, Darrell Berrigan of the *Saturday Evening Post* published a critical exposé on Occupation babies, meant to shame occupation soldiers for their irresponsibility and white readers; Berrigan claimed the number of mixed-race Occupation children was between 1,000 – 4,000 and that nearly 100 children had been starved in various institutions.[51] A damning report, such negative coverage demonstrates exactly the kind of critical press the American Occupying forces had been attempting to avoid. Due to GHQ's ban on the census of mixed-race children it was not until 1953 that the Japanese Ministry of Welfare started to map official demographic data.[52] According to the 1953 survey and earlier data, there were approximately 5,000 mixed-race children fathered by American soldiers.[53] Further data from the survey revealed that 84.3% had American fathers; 86.1% were white and 11.5% were Black; 77% had been acknowledged by their fathers; and that 48.8% were raised by their biological mother, 26.3% by unrelated caregivers, 19.4% by both biological parents, and 16.7% were raised by other relatives.[54] What this data represents is that the majority of mixed-race children were fathered by white Americans and the living situations for these children mainly consisted of single-mother households and welfare facilities. Japan could not demand child-support payments from the American government for mixed-race children as it would open the Japanese Government to the hypocrisy of having no intentions themselves of supporting them.[55] The Japanese Government adopted an approach that "implicitly acknowledged [mixed-race children's] physical difference" but attempted to emphasize their Japaneseness.[56] Visible difference became an incorporated part of government policy, the Japanese Government coming up with strategies to downplay the image of mixed-race Japanese, as the American government

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45 Koshiro, 162.

46 W. Puck Brecher, "Eurasians and Racial Capital in a 'Race War,'" *Asia Pacific Perspectives* 14, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 4.

47 Koshiro, "The Problem of Miscegenation," 180.

48 Koshiro, 180.

49 Koshiro, 180.

50 Koshiro, 159.

51 Michael Cullen Green, "A Brown Baby Crisis," in *Black Yanks in the Pacific* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 90; Koshiro, "The Problem of Miscegenation," 162.

52 Koshiro, "The Problem of Miscegenation," 161.

53 Okamura, "The Language of 'Racial Mixture,'" 48.

54 Okamura, 49.

55 Robert A. Fish, "'Mixed-Blood' Japanese: A Reconsideration of Race and Purity in Japan," in *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, ed. Michael Weiner, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 49.

56 Fish, "'Mixed-Blood' Japanese," 46.

had demonstrated clearly that it was uninterested in these children unless it impacted their collective reputation.

Not only did GHQ limit the official recognition of mixed-race children, but their Occupation era policies censored their public image too, a policy that would continue to have repercussions even after Occupation. The Civil Information and Education Division (CIE) censored images of mixed-race children in film and media; mixed race children only appeared widely onscreen after the Occupation ended in 1952.[57] 1952-53 was a key year in the depiction of mixed-race children; it was the end of Occupation censorship but also the time when the first Occupation children were becoming of age to start school.[58] Based on pre-war studies on IQ by Tanaka Kan'nichi, the Japanese Government and general society believed that mixing with white blood would collect undesirable qualities in mixed-race offspring, resulting in physical inferiority, and lowering intelligence and spirituality in these children.[59] In 1953 alone, three films about the 'mixed-race problem' were released. One of the films, *Yassa Mossa* (1953) was made with orphans from the Elizabeth Saunders Home as actors, and its message was given the seal of approval by the American Joint Committee for Assisting Japanese-American Orphans, a semi-official committee meant to liaise between the two governments and provide education on how to handle the 'mixed-race problem'.[60]

Images of mixed-race children continued to be ideologically loaded even after they began to be shown onscreen. The image of mixed-race children was "inseparable" from the shame of defeat which was linked to a failure of masculinity.[61] Symbolically these children were evidence of Japanese emasculation and supplantation by American virility. Mixed-race children were also known as *otoshigo* (*落とし子*, lit. 'dropped' or 'fallen' child), a term for illegitimate children or 'products of war'.[62] This sense of defeat and emasculation corroborated fears of Americans 'corrupting' Japanese female sexuality and 'polluting' racial purity. When asked about mixed-race children in the early 1950s, "most Japanese agreed that 'mixed-blood' children were in some way different".[63] With difference linked to visible markers, how mixed-race Japanese were represented to society became critical in forming social attitudes towards them. Family members of mixed-race children and child welfare professionals expressed concern that the news coverage of mixed-race Japanese was exacerbating the issue by playing up fears about how these children will affect the nation.[64] With the historical context which informed social attitudes examined, analysis now turns to the case studies.

Film Case Studies

For the purposes of this paper, two films will be studied in depth, though future research should incorporate a larger number of film texts. Analysing the films in chronological order, how mixed-race characters are portrayed in relation to contemporaneous social concerns will be examined. Partially as a response to Mika Ko's claim that Japanese films of the 1950s-1970s "rarely depicted the lives of mixed-race children but instead sexualized and objectified female biracial bodies under a heterosexual male gaze to illustrate emasculated (Japanese) masculinity",[65] this analysis seeks to account for how portrayals of gender, race, and class might constitute a wider variety of mixed-race subjects. Using close textual analysis, the onscreen elements are scrutinized for how they constitute mixed-race subjectivity and what that construct reveals about the society and time that produced it.

Ko Nakahira's *Crazed Fruit* (1956) was controversial at its release for its depiction of moral corruption, sexuality, and louche youth culture. The character of Frank, played by Masumi Okada, is explicitly and textually mixed-race. He excels as the film's ideal man, sexually profligate and nihilistic, and acts as a mentor for the main male character's own corruption. The second film analysed is *Kiku and Isamu* (1959), a socially progressive film about a

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[57] Ko, "Representations of 'Mixed-Race' Children," 629.
[58] Fish, "'Mixed-Blood' Japanese," 45.
[59] Koshiro, "The Problem of Miscegenation," 169.
[60] Koshiro, 185–86.
[61] Ko, "Representations of 'Mixed-Race' Children," 631.
[62] Okamura, "The Language of 'Racial Mixture,'" 49.
[63] Fish, "'Mixed-Blood' Japanese," 45.
[64] Fish, "'Mixed-Blood' Japanese," 47.
[65] Ahn, "Mixed-Race: From Pathology to Celebration," 256.

Black-Japanese pair of siblings, contrasting the half-white Frank. The film uses the siblings as metaphors for the two different approaches to mixed-race children, with Isamu leaving to go abroad and Kiku staying in the countryside with their grandmother. Analysing both films, an overarching analysis of themes and patterns of representation will be conducted, taking into consideration the intersections of class, gender, and racialized beauty standards.

Crazed Fruit (1956)

Ko Nakahira's *Crazed Fruit* caused moral outcry for the loose morals and nihilistic picture of modern youth it presented. Fears of youth being corrupted by such images abounded in both public and political spheres.[66] The film's portrayal of moral decay in youth and the combined concern over it makes it a particularly interesting case study for the depiction of a textually mixed-race character. The character of Frank – played by French-born half-Danish Masumi Okada – is textually mixed-race and there are several lines and vignettes that reference his reality in opposition to the other *jun-nihonjin* characters. Importantly, Okada's character – referred to as 'Frank' was not mixed-race in the original short story and only went by 'Hirasawa'.[67] After a brief plot description, an analysis of the construction of Frank's mixed-race subjectivity will be given, followed an examination of how his sexuality as a mixed-race person is valorised in the sexual economy of moral reprehensibility the film constructs.

The plot of *Crazed Fruit* comes from the short story of the same title by Shintarō Ishihara, and is considered part of the *taiyōzoku* or Sun Tribe films about rebellious post-war youths. Ishihara later became a conservative politician with a strong interest in *nihonjinron*, going so far in 1968 as to praise Japan as a unique phenomenon of a mono-racial, mono-lingual people who had preserved their culture since ancient times.[68] Keeping in mind Ishihara's later turn to conservatism and *nihonjinron* discourse, certain elements of the film's plot take on more signification, at times almost ironically so. The film revolves around two brothers, Natsuhisa (Yujiro Ishihara, brother to Shintaro) and Haruji (Masahiko Tsugawa) who are spending a purposeless summer with a similar group of disillusioned and hedonistic youths by the seaside. Frank, a half-American character, is a part of the group and hosts most of their gatherings. Both brothers get caught up in a love affair with Eri, a Japanese woman who is married to a middle-aged white American. Worldly Natsuhisa relentlessly pursues Eri despite knowing about his brother's interest, sneaking around behind Haruji's back to continue the affair. Once Haruji finds out, the betrayal is so great that he attempts to kill Natsuhisa and Eri by running them over in a boat. The film's themes of nihilism, rejecting tradition, and sexual freedom become entwined with the performance of Japanese masculinity in the post-war generation and their disillusionment with the previous generations' values. Being able to perform these new standards of masculinity in the socio-sexual economy these delinquent youths have created for themselves gains significance, and it is almost paradoxical that it is Frank who performs these values most successfully.

Okada's Frank is textually mixed-race, acknowledged by the diegetic (in-world) characters, and reflecting some of the stereotypes for mixed-race children of the period. It is not only Frank that is aware of his mixed-race subjectivity, but also the group and external characters too who recognize his markers of visible difference. Frank is confirmed as mixed-race in the first scene he is introduced in, with a throwaway line when one character asks if he will be returning to America to visit his mother.[69] The verb used is *kaeru (帰る)* 'to return (home)', which is consciously different than the verb *modoru (戻る)* 'to return'. Japan, then, is not thought of as Frank's home by the other boys. In a later part of the same scene, another boy jokingly tells Frank "Yankee go home" over a card game.[70] Though said teasingly, the joke is meant as a reproach to Frank's winning while invoking his Otherness to dismiss him. The group sees Frank 'foreign' when his ability emasculates their own, replicating certain dynamics of emasculation of the immediate post-war with American soldiers. Frank's escapades and rebellious outlook represent the

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[66] Liam Grealy, Catherine Driscoll, and Kirsten Cather, "A History of Age-Based Film Classification in Japan," *Japan Forum* 34, no. 4 (August 8, 2022): 459–60, https://doi.org/10.1080/09555803.2020.1778058.

[67] 慎太郎 [Shintarō] 石原 [Ishihara], *石原慎太郎短編全集. 1 [Ishihara Shintarō Tanpen Zenshū]* (Tokyo: 新潮社 [Shinchōsha], 1973), 260.

[68] Ko, *Japanese Cinema and Otherness*, 14.

[69] *Crazed Fruit*, directed by Ko Nakahira (Nikkatsu, 1956), 7:15.

[70] *Crazed Fruit*, 8:08.

sexual and social future threat of Occupation babies as they grow near adulthood. Though Frank does not represent the subjectivity of Occupation babies, his subjectivity is constructed to demonstrate the impact of Occupation not only on *jun-nihonjin* but on mixed-race Japanese too.

The clearest example of Frank's mixed-race subjectivity being recognized and named by strangers is in the club sequence. Frank outright rejects the only English-speaking identity the waiter inscribes upon him, with Frank re-inscribing his Japanese identity publicly. The sequence begins with a medium long tracking shot, following the group of boys as they walk across the club. Along the way, they cut through the dancefloor and circle a Japanese couple dancing, who are made visibly nervous, their short height and slightness appearing in contrast to the height and breadth of Frank and Natsuhisa.[71] Frank and Natsuhisa both wear light-coloured suits, but Frank is marked out as different from the group by the type of suit. Frank wears a light-coloured formal evening jacket with a shawl lapel and black bowtie, contrasting the open collars and notched lapels of the darker coloured suit jackets the others wear over brightly patterned shirts. Panning down, the tracking shot becomes stationary as the group comes upon a table of young women and sit down in concert.[72] The uniformity in their actions (sitting down, leaning forward, lighting up cigarettes) and their timing in delivering dialogue stresses group cohesion. Cutting to the other side of the table, the men are framed in between the shoulders of the women, Frank on the very lefthand edge of the frame.[73] The waiter enters from outside the right side of the frame, addressing each member of the group for their drink order. Three of the boys, including Natsuhisa, give orders for cocktails in *katakana eigo* or katakana English, where English words are transcribed into the katakana syllabary and pronounced with a Japanese accent.[74] Only when the waiter gets to Frank does he change his mannerisms and switches to English, taking on an obsequious tone as he asks, "What would you like to have, sir?".[75] A hard cut to a medium closeup on Frank has him turn to the waiter (established through editing to eyeline match) and delivers the only order spoken in Japanese, "*shōchū aru* [do you have Japanese distilled liquor]?".[76]

Michael Raine's analysis calls *shōchū* the "coarsest of Japanese liquors" and Isolde Standish describes it as a "working-class drink" in relation to the scene.[77] Frank's retort contrasts him with the group, and it refuses the categorization of 'foreigner' that the waiter attempts to restrict him with. In asking for something considered 'low brow' such as *shōchū*, Frank signals a knowledge of culture that goes beyond the superficial. It also makes it clear that for Natsuhisa and the others, secure in their Japaneseness and that it will be recognized by others, the foreign drinks add an element of 'coolness' to their rebellious image. For Frank, who is constantly facing challenges to his Japaneseness as a mixed-race person, that same drink or use of *katakana eigo* would simply work to mark him further as an Other. In the post-war, post-Occupation context, whiteness was equated with foreignness, a foreignness associated with "English as a dominant world language, and often of physical beauty and strength".[78] The waiter's switch to English coincides with this foreign association, implying a relationship between Frank's physical appearance, presumed language use, and his status as Other. The jump cut to a closeup of Frank snapping adds a kinetic energy to the scene,[79] one that Raine describes as bringing a dimension of violence to defining the group.[80] Frank's lean energetic body represents the youthful ideal of the time, supposedly giving him "the physical capital most valued in the field of masculinity",[81] and yet this cultural capital is not enough to cement his place as anything but a beautiful,

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71 *Crazed Fruit*, 38:42.

72 *Crazed Fruit*, 39:29.

73 *Crazed Fruit*, 39:39.

74 *Crazed Fruit*, 39:43.

75 *Crazed Fruit*, 39:47.

76 *Crazed Fruit*, 39:52.

77 Michael John Raine, "Youth, Body, and Subjectivity in the Japanese Cinema, 1955–1960" (Ph.D., United States -- Iowa, The University of Iowa), 161; Isolde Standish, "Cinema and Transgression," in *A New History of Japanese Cinema: A Century of Narrative Film* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 229.

78 Laurel D. Kamada, "Mixed-Ethnic Girls and Boys as Similarly Powerless and Powerful: Embodiment of Attractiveness and Grotesqueness," *Discourse Studies* 11, no. 3 (June 2009): 332–33, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445609102447.

79 *Crazed Fruit*, 39:54.

80 Raine, "Youth, Body, and Subjectivity in the Japanese Cinema, 1955–1960," 161.

white-adjacent, outsider. This scene, through its use of framing and costuming, defines Frank as Othered both from the group of rebellious youth and Japanese society through an outside lens. Frank's mixed-race subjectivity is defined internally and externally along an axis of perceived foreignness. The foreignness of his body becomes the site of exotic spectacle, but the exercise of his sexuality marks him as part of the group of *taiyōzoku* youth.

Frank, along with the rest of the group, is an unabashedly sexual creature; indeed, his deployment of sexuality, along with his family's material wealth, marks him out as the unofficial leader of the group and the most successful at adhering to the group's standards of masculinity. Standish argues that the basic rule of masculinity for the group is defined by its sexual economy in which "women should not be valued other than objects of [sexual] exchange".[82] Brothers Natsuhisa and Haruji are doomed to a tragic ending because they give Eri more value than the group dynamics would dictate, juxtaposing them with Frank.[83] In Frank's introduction, Natsuhisa asks Frank where he's been. Frank had to leave town because he stole his current girlfriend Michiko from another man, leading another member of the group to remark that "Frank's amorous intrigues are world-class."[84] From the beginning of the film, Frank is established as both sexual and successful over other (presumably *jun-nihonjin*) men in his sexual conquests.

Later in a festival sequence, Frank is confronted by an angry group of *jun-nihonjin* boys. The majority of the confrontation happens offscreen, but the context of Frank's replies indicates the confrontation was racist in nature. Adhering to the group's sexual economy, Frank immediately and nonchalantly offers to "return (*お返します*)" Michiko to them.[85] To Frank, Michiko's value is relegated to sexual object, not worth the trouble of a confrontation with other men. Despite the earlier trouble to steal her from another man, she is disposable in the grand scheme of his priorities. Michiko storms off, though later walks past him in another area of the festival.[86] The mise-en-scène (arrangement of elements onscreen) of this second interaction work to visually stage Frank's homosocial and sexual priorities. The interaction is in a medium shot, from a vantage point behind the counter of a shooting game. Frank briefly glances at Michiko but clearly dismisses her as he turns his attention back to the game. He is focused on loading and shooting the gun, with a jump cut to a closeup of the bullet knocking over the figurine of a man as Michiko walks away. Frank's focus on the gun – the pseudo-phallus – aligns his priorities with the homosocial sphere of the *taiyōzoku* boys rather than any of his female love interests. He exemplifies and performs the values of this group better than the *jun-nihonjin* members of it, but these values are based in hedonistic nihilism and rebellion.

Kiku and Isamu (1959)

The most widely seen film on the 'mixed-race problem' in the 1950s,[87] *Kiku and Isamu* is a social realist film, created with the explicit goal of presenting a sympathetic view of mixed-race children. It was not the first film to deal with the issue of 'racial hierarchy' amongst mixed children – that distinction goes to the now lost *Mixed-race Children* (*Konketsuji*, 1953) by Hideo Sekikawa – but *Kiku and Isamu* did so the most visibly and enduringly. Rather than the half-white middle-class metropolitan mixed-race subject found in *Crazed Fruit*'s Frank, the film follows a pair of half-Black, lower-class siblings, and through them highlights the prejudice faced by mixed-race children and concerns about their future. Despite the sympathetic nature of the film's intentions, the film does not go far enough in interrogating the prejudices mixed-race children face, so while Kiku and Isamu may have moments of sympathy, their overall representation and projected futures are negative.

Due to the ideological imperative behind the film's creation, rather than a coherent plot in the style of classical Hollywood narrative, *Kiku and Isamu* is a series of vignettes strung together by the overarching through line of figuring out a future for the siblings as their grandmother becomes less able to take care of them. Precipitated by a visit

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⑻ Tony Coles, "Negotiating the Field of Masculinity: The Production and Reproduction of Multiple Dominant Masculinities," *Men and Masculinities* 12, no. 1 (October 2009): 38, https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X07309502.

⑻ Standish, "Cinema and Transgression," 229.

⑻ Standish, 228.

⑻ *Crazed Fruit*, 7:05-7:11.

⑻ *Crazed Fruit*, 18:26.

⑻ *Crazed Fruit*, 19:16.

⑻ Ko, "Representations of 'Mixed-Race' Children," 631.

to the doctor, the grandmother realizes that as peasant farmers they cannot afford treatment for her and her health will only get worse. The doctor suggests sending them away to America to an adoption agency, which the grandmother initially refuses but reconsiders.[88] A series of incidents at the main town and school reveal the discrimination faced by Kiku and Isamu and other children like them. An adoption agency facilitates the adoption of Isamu by an African American couple, and he is sent away.[89] The grandmother plans to send Kiku to a temple to become a Buddhist nun, but she is opposed to that. Kiku tries to hang herself after her first menstruation, but the rope breaks and her grandmother discovers her. The film ends with Kiku going off into the fields with her grandmother to learn how to take over their crops in preparation for her future. The two different futures offered to Kiku and Isamu in the film reflect a real-world struggle between differing activist factions over what kind of future mixed-race children should be prepared for.

Turning now to the film, the construction of mixed-race identity in *Kiku and Isamu* is first based on the recognition of difference, specifically self-recognition of mixed-race subjectivity and its translation to *uchi* Other status. At the beginning of the film, the grandmother reveals to the doctor that Kiku and Isamu do not know they are mixed, that she has explained their difference as just a bad case of sunburn.[90] Both children can recognize that they look differently and are treated differently by other *jun-nihonjin* but they cannot recognize that the cause of it is because of their mixed-race heritage. The grandmother does not reveal to Kiku that her father is American until nearly 40 minutes into the film's runtime.[91] After this revelation, Kiku lies on the floor and turns her hand over, examining her body for signs of Otherness.[92] The shot is over her shoulder in a medium closeup, denying the audience access to her inner thoughts and emotions. Kiku's reaction is to then tell her grandmother that if rubber loses its colour as it stretches then her skin could too, as she cartoonishly stretches out the features of her face with her hands.[93] Self-recognition as the Other requires a simultaneous recognition of what makes one *uchi* or *jun-nihonjin* and that one lacks those qualities. In Kiku's situation, she focuses on the site of visible difference, her skin colour. Isamu only finds out when Kiku tells him in a pique of anger, frustrated at his inability to keep up with their grandmother's conversation after they were both harassed at school.[94] Both Kiku and Isamu have racialized experiences within their community due to their skin colour signifying mixedness. At school, Isamu is called *kuronbo* pejoratively by a classmate – Kyūichi – and told to eat bananas.[95] Due to the negative delivery of the term in the film, Ko translates *kuronbo* as "nigger", though Hyoue Okamura translates it as "'blackie' or 'darkie'" citing the different socio-historical context and common usage of the phrase.[96] Through either interpretation, the word is intended to describe this specific visible difference as an insult. Kyūichi defends his name calling as simply describing what is true, demonstrating how Othering based on skin colour is internalized even at such a young age. Though the teacher admonishes Kyūichi, there is never a real explanation or punishment for the name calling, so while it is signalled to the audience as something rude, the action's discriminatory implications are not explored. At the end of the festival scene, Kiku yells at the crowd to stop calling her *kuronbo*, calling the *jun-nihonjin* crowd "*kiironbo*" or "yellowies" (*ki/黄* = yellow).[97] This moment is not intended to be read as Kiku claiming her mixed-race identity, but rather an instance of her internalizing and redirecting the logic of Othering based on skin colour directed at her and her brother.[98] Like Kyuichi, the crowd do not see their name calling of the siblings as wrong or bad; even Kiku's outburst is framed as an extension of her wild behaviour. For Kiku more than Isamu, the issue of skin colour is a recurring motif in her construction of mixed-race subjectivity, especially as it relates to her gendered experience and desires for her future.

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88 *Kiku and Isamu*, directed by Tadashi Imai (Shochiku Studio, 1959), 20:14.
89 *Kiku and Isamu*, 1:18:57.
90 *Kiku and Isamu*, 20:41-20:48.
91 *Kiku and Isamu*, 39:42.
92 *Kiku and Isamu*, 42:48.
93 *Kiku and Isamu*, 43:08.
94 *Kiku and Isamu*, 53:09.
95 *Kiku and Isamu*, 46:18.
96 Ko, "Representations of 'Mixed-Race' Children," 633; Okamura, "The Language of 'Racial Mixture,'" 75.
97 *Kiku and Isamu*, 1:02:16.
98 Ko, "Representations of 'Mixed-Race' Children," 633–34.

Outside perception of Kiku's mixed-race subjectivity is heavily influenced by her gender, developing concerns about the desirability and reproductive futures of mixed-race children in relation to female subjectivity. Isamu, though a titular character, leaves two thirds of the way through the film and his still relative childishness precludes diegetic consideration of his gendered sexuality unlike Okada's Frank. Kiku is only 11 years old, but her frame is visibly bigger, and her style of play is emphasized as more aggressive and more physical. Her body and attitude are frequently characterized as grotesque, especially as they are characterized in relation to the other *jun-nihonjin* girls of the same age. The notion of the "foreigner as grotesque" emerged after contact with whites at the end of the 19th century and was further redoubled by wartime propaganda during WW2 which marked facial and body hair along with body proportions as sites of the grotesque.[99] The grotesque foreigner is usually gendered as male.[100] Kiku is neither white nor male, yet the archetype of 'foreigner as grotesque' is still visually applied to her body size. It can be argued that her perceived Blackness places her outside the gendered beauty hierarchy applied to half-white and *jun-nihonjin* Japanese women. Kiku is called "Fatty", "Bullfrog", and "Gorilla" by other children,[101] drawing dehumanizing comparisons to her frame.

Even at such a young age, she is not considered a beautiful or cute child, but an Othered creature. The visual construction of her body is part of a larger history of "cinema's scopophilic display of aliens as spectacle",[102] a kind of sadomasochistic pleasure gained by the viewer from looking upon something so completely Othered. Hiroshi Wagatsuma's 1967 article argued that the white/beautiful versus black/ugly dichotomy was the product of Japanese aesthetic tradition and untied to Western racial discourse.[103] However, when this postwar relation of black/ugly is applied to Black people, it becomes a matter of race, even if the origins of discrimination are supposedly based on a different historical tradition. Within the film, Kiku recognizes this beauty dichotomy and how she does not fit. After losing track of a baby she was minding, Kiku goes to wait with her neighbour Seijiro for news of the baby. She ends up playing around with his wife Kimie's makeup, messily applying white foundation to her face. She adopts a flirtatious attitude towards Seijiro, mimicking things from movies and performances she had seen.[104] Her shift in behaviour, prompted by the adoption of a 'white visibility' links the idea of whiteness to desirability while simultaneously sexualizing the Black child, an economy that Kiku even unwittingly seems to understand and replicate. Seijiro rejects Kiku's mimicked flirting, prompting her to look at her painted self in the mirror. She makes faces at her reflection and dismisses it as horrible, saying "It's because I'm a bad child,"[105] as she wipes off the makeup. This outburst of anger reifies bad/black and good/white; Seijiro's rejection, though necessary, is also a recognition of her inability to perform whiteness which is linked to her inability to be a 'good' child and mind the neighbour's baby carefully. In this Japanese context, white and Black are made out to be concrete categorizations that in mixed-race children can off-shoot Japanese subjectivity in a scaled hybridity, however one scaled category (i.e., whiteness) was considered superior to the other. The discussion of beauty and visible appeal may seem to be a superficial point, but beauty or perceived desirability retains more value in a gendered context for women, especially in relation to social position and the transition to adulthood.

Kiku's gendered mixed-race subjectivity is constantly putting her future in a precarious position, specifically the future related to her reproductivity. Having been visually and diegetically constructed as the grotesque, bad, foreigner, her desirability as a bride is projected as unlikely. At several points throughout the film, strangers and her own grandmother remark that she will not be able to get married or have children if she remains in Japan.[106] There is only one interaction in the whole film that presents the possibility of Kiku becoming a mother as likely, and this dis-

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(99) Kamada, "Mixed-Ethnic Girls and Boys as Similarly Powerless and Powerful," 335.

(100) Kamada, 339.

(101) *Kiku and Isamu*, 2:35-2:46.

(102) Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, "The Imperial Imaginary," in *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 372.

(103) Mikiko Ashikari, "Cultivating Japanese Whiteness: The 'Whitening' Cosmetics Boom and the Japanese Identity," *Journal of Material Culture* 10, no. 1 (March 2005): 75, https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183505050095.

(104) *Kiku and Isamu*, 1:38:23.

(105) *Kiku and Isamu*, 1:38:47.

(106) *Kiku and Isamu*, 18:17, 40:36.

cussion is framed in relation to reaching adulthood, the difficulties of achieving marriage elided. In a discussion with her schoolteacher about her absent father, the following exchange takes place:[107]

Teacher: "Well it's not that white is good and black is bad. If you live a good life decent people will accept you for it. […]"

Kiku: "[…] People say my ass is huge and I wiggle it."

Teacher: "When you're an adult that's what happens. It's a symbol of a woman's health."

Kiku: "I don't want to be an adult. I don't want to be bigger."

Teacher: "What are you talking about? You can't be a good mother without being an adult!"

This exchange with her schoolteacher, though sympathetic to her plight and the social discrimination she faces, is still rather non-specific about Kiku's ability to become a mother or a bride. It interpellates the audience in its description of "decent people" but only to a point of acceptance of her difference. Nothing related to how this translates to marriage or motherhood and Japanese society's role is included in this messaging especially for a girl like Kiku. Her reproduction is still suspect, despite the film's progressive values. Yet this remains the most positive connection between Kiku and motherhood in the film, despite the scene's focus on the inevitability and importance of becoming an adult. In post-war Japan, there remained a strong expectation that girls would marry and start families and Kiku's impending puberty brings the difficulties of achieving that as a Black-Japanese woman to the forefront. At one point, her grandmother considers sending her to a Buddhist convent, which strongly encourages vows of celibacy.[108] Though this option is ultimately rejected, it solves the issue of her reproductivity by denying and confining it. Once this option is no longer considered a real future, the implications of adulthood and her ability to achieve the adulthood comes under further scrutiny. She is mistaken for a girl of marriageable age by a street vendor; the size and shape of her body being judged as adult.[109] It is the maturation of her body that causes her to attempt suicide. Kiku begins menstruating, and not knowing what it is, attempts to hang herself.[110] When her grandmother finds her, Kiku explains her reason for wanting to die is that she does not want to become any bigger. As Ko notes, paradoxically it is the 'bigness' of her body that saves her, being too heavy, the rope breaks before she can harm herself.[111] Adulthood has arrived for Kiku, and with it reproductive possibility. Yet with the perceived Otherness and alienness of her body, her future path, explicitly set along gendered lines in a way that it is not for Isamu, is still left ambiguous.

The two futures of mixed-race children exemplified by Kiku and Isamu reflect the contemporaneous public and political debates about how to deal the 'mixed-race problem'. Of the activists there were two main camps: an integrationist approach, represented by Kiku and their grandmother's renewed determination to teach her how to become a peasant, and a segregationist approach which would raise mixed-race children in isolation from Japanese society before sending them off to America, represented by Isamu and his adoption by a Black American family. Neither faction was entirely success in dictating policy but their efforts to affect change are captured on film, as *Kiku and Isamu* ruminates on. Giving first a brief explanation of each faction, how the trajectories of Kiku and Isamu reflect these activist movements will be examined in relation to interpellation.

The faction championing the integration of mixed-race Japanese children into Japanese society was headed by Imao Hirano, himself half-American, half-Japanese. Hirano founded *Remi no Kai* or Remi's Society, the "first advocacy by, of, and for racially mixed people in Japan" in 1953, along with several other mixed-race celebrities.[112] This included actor Ureo Egawa (half-German), who starred in the pre-war film *Japanese Girls at the Harbour* (*Minato no Nihon Musume*, 1933) along with Yukiko Inoue (half-Dutch) in textually mixed-race roles.[113] From the beginning,

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[107] *Kiku and Isamu*, 1:29:30-1:30:22.

[108] Paula Kane Robinson Arai, *Women Living Zen: Japanese Soto Buddhist Nuns* (New York, UNITED STATES: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 1999), 140, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/west/detail.action?docID=273411.

[109] *Kiku and Isamu*, 58:06.

[110] *Kiku and Isamu*, 1:50:20.

[111] Ko, "Representations of 'Mixed-Race' Children," 635.

[112] Okamura, "The Language of 'Racial Mixture,'" 53.

[113] Okamura, 50.

mixed-race advocacy was tied to the Arts and representation in them, and continued to be important in the group's later activities. Hirano adopted several children into his family register – an illegal act – in order to give them Japanese citizenship.[114] By the time the group dissolved in the 1980s, it is estimated that they and Hirano helped approximately 2,000 mixed-race individuals.[115] The emphasis on asserting the Japaneseness of mixed-race children and their integration into Japanese society was a key point of the group's objectives to help mixed-race Japanese. The work of *Remi no Kai* and Hirano has largely been overshadowed by the lives and works of segregationist activists.

Kiku's narrative ends with her grandmother's decision to keep her in the village, choosing to try and integrate her into Japanese society, mimicking the real-life goals of *Remi no Kai*. The ending of the film remains ambiguous with Kiku walking off into the distance with her grandmother to learn how to farm more effectively, yet the questions of her marriageability and acceptance by Japanese society continues to go unresolved. From Kiku's reaction this is meant to be a happy ending, but the uncertainty of the future before her complicates the audience's understanding of it. Many times in the film Kiku explicitly and implicitly expresses a desire to be considered Japanese, or to at least have her physical difference made invisible. In Kiku's understanding of her mixed-race subjectivity, to become invisible as a mixed-race person is her goal for assimilation. Her clear, visible difference represents an "unassimilable excess" that no matter how culturally, linguistically, or economically Japanese she is, it cannot be overcome.[116] Though the film does not make textual reference to *Remi no Kai* specifically, the social stance associated with it is made clear by Kiku's ending. The presumed *jun-nihonjin* audience is intended to watch this ending and be instructed that assimilation for these children is a happy ending. However, because the actual role of Japanese social prejudice and forces like *nihonjinron* are not interrogated or implicated as the root of potential threats to this happy future, the actual work of creating a more accepting populace is left half-finished. Individual actions are condemned; their systematic implications are not, thus the happy ending promised to Kiku and children like her remain precarious. Equally precarious was the futures of mixed-race children segregated in special schools and sent away from Japan.

The segregationist faction headed by Miki Sawada believed mixed-race children should be prepared for a life outside of Japan, under the assumption that Japanese society would never accept these 'inferior' children. Sawada ran the Elizabeth Saunders Home for abandoned mixed-race children, segregating them from Japanese society in the belief that mixed race children had "mental and physical handicaps" that the outside world would discriminate against them for; Sawada believed these children needed to grow up in an enclosed environment in order to develop before being sent outside of Japan, likely to America.[117] Sawada appealed to Crawford Sams, the chief of Public Health and Welfare Section of the SCAP, for help in immigrating mixed-children to America, who disagreed with the segregationist approach on the principle that one day US Forces would leave Japan and these children behind.[118] Help was not given to Sawada, and the number of children she actually helped enter the United States was quite low. Despite very public appeals for funding – which helped preserve Sawada's efforts in popular memory and history – she was ultimately not very successful in a large-scale effort to eject mixed-race children from Japan.[119] What Isamu's narrative does reflect is how the mythos surrounding Sawada and her involvement with mixed-race Japanese became built into public discussion.

Isamu is chosen by an adoption agency and sent to America, reflecting the segregationist approach. Isamu is younger than Kiku, clearly still a child with the concerns of approaching adulthood still not yet pressing. He is also male, and his voyage to America mimics their father's return after the war. The grandmother's decision that America would be the better choice for him is a viewpoint held by many of their neighbours, but it is not a universal view. Seijiro brings into the discussion the problem of anti-Black racism in America, and how Isamu may be going off to

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[114] Okamura, 50.

[115] Hirano Remi, "平野レミ「平和は幸せな食卓から」," Remy, accessed April 25, 2024, https://remy.jp/column/039.

[116] Ko, "Representations of 'Mixed-Race' Children," 636.

[117] Koshiro, "The Problem of Miscegenation," 178.

[118] Green, "A Brown Baby Crisis," 92.

[119] Green, "A Brown Baby Crisis," 101.

face worse discrimination than in Japan, only without a family behind him.[120] The entirety of the discussion is a thinly veiled replication of the ongoing social and political debates of how to plan for the futures of mixed-race children. Each neighbour and the grandmother represent different viewpoints in the debate, designed to both educate the audience in the multiple perspectives on the issue and to interpellate them into believing that despite its drawbacks there is still benefit in sending these children away. One of the arguments against keeping Isamu is that one day the siblings may grow angry with their grandmother for how they are treated in Japan and take it out on her.[121] The view of mixed-race Japanese as very sensitive and highly emotional, trending towards anti-social was not an uncommon social or scientific view; a 1952 IQ survey that attempted to link temperament to race promulgated this idea.[122] Sending them away to be raised in other environments with others of 'similar temperament' then becomes more palatable. In Isamu's narrative, the fear of the unknown looms too large to permit a straightforward happy ending but it is presented as the only option. The excitable and disruptive behaviour Isamu has already exhibited in the film (e.g., bringing a dog into the classroom to mock a teacher, fighting with classmates, climbing a festival pole and causing a public commotion, etc.) work to construct him as ill-fitting in Japanese society. Leaving for America is then presented as the only option for him and the larger *jun-nihonjin* society. The visible difference is excised, made invisible.

Conclusion

The mixed-race Japanese subject in its varied forms of visibility and invisibility in post-war film is inevitably tied to actual historical reality. By analysing films produced after the end of Occupation censorship, the images of mixed-race Japanese as well as the narratives told about them become apparent. Surveying the historical context and attitudes towards race, two key dichotomies were established as an analytical framework, 1) white/good/beautiful versus black/bad/ugly, and 2) 'pure' Japanese versus non-Japanese (the Other). The race of the non-Japanese parent, class, and gender impacted both lived reality and the filmic depiction of mixed-race Japanese. The type of mixed-race Japanese that were examined belong to a very narrow subsection of the population (half Asian (non-Japanese), for example, were not included in this study). Historical framing of half-American half-Japanese as the sole demographic in relation to the so-called mixed-race problem can present an image of mixed-race Japanese subjectivity as monolithic but these films show that even in the popular consciousness there was an implicit understanding of how race, gender, and class created a spectrum of subjectivities.

Two films were analysed, *Crazed Fruit* and *Kiku and Isamu*, in this paper representing two different kinds of mixed-race subjects. *Crazed Fruit*'s Frank is explicitly a mixed-race character; his subjectivity as a mixed-race Japanese person is never fully forgotten by the gang of youths he leads, but he is able to go beyond the *uchi* Other position at times through his chameleon-like ability to out-perform the group at their own values and standards of sexual economy. Though the others in the group can try on Americanized (i.e., white, upper-class) signifiers like clothing, *katakana eigo*, and attitudes towards casual sex, these things mark them out as participating in a 'modernized' popular culture. For Frank, these same signifiers simply reinforce his 'foreignness' and the half-white features that marks him as an object of desire, also marks him as *uchi* Other to a Japanese society that fails to see him as anything else. Though the film does not ultimately condemn the nihilistic outlook, misogyny, or rejection of tradition that the main characters espouse, the reactions of side characters within the narrative and the negative backlash against the movie in real life construct this depiction of mixed-race subjectivity as negative.

Imai's *Kiku and Isamu* is one of the enduring social progressive films on the 'mixed-race problem' to come out of the 1950s and one of the first to focus on the subjectivity of half-Black mixed-race children. The film interpellates a *jun-nihonjin* audience through real-world references to ongoing social debates, addressing questions and concerns through a variety of viewpoints as represented by various *jun-nihonjin* characters. The construction of mixed-race subjectivity happens as part of the film's plot, the realization of which is characterized by the sibling's internaliza-

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(120) *Kiku and Isamu*, 1:07:17.

(121) *Kiku and Isamu*, 1:07:04.

(122) Koshiro, "The Problem of Miscegenation," 170–71.

tion of a racial hierarchy that defines them firmly as Other. Imai links the liveliness and rowdiness of the two children to their ethnic background and no other children are shown to behave in the same way to the same extent; any flaws that they may have as interesting characters or growing children become attributed to their mixedness. A faulty syllogism, that despite the intentions to depict criticisms and discrimination against them as deplorable, still create a negative representation of mixed-race children. For Kiku especially, the negative construction of her mixed-race subjectivity is intimately tied to her gender and approaching reproductive capability. Her Black body constructed as alien and thus undesirable, has ramifications for her ability to become an adult through the rite of marriage and childbearing. For Kiku and Isamu, they as avatars of Black-Japanese Occupation babies represent a subjectivity that desires or requires erasure. Kiku desires assimilation because it will make her more Japanese; Isamu requires erasure because it is thought that he will do better elsewhere. Though the film does its best to be sympathetic overall to the plight of mixed-race children, its refusal to name Japanese social conventions as a major source for the discrimination faced by mixed-race children and, intentional or not, its reinforcement of black/ugly/bad and white/beautiful/good ultimately creates a negative representation of Japanese mixed-race subjectivity.

As demonstrated by these films, the depiction of American-Japanese mixed-race people in the post-war changed based on social imperatives and the physical development of the Occupation babies. In each film, the mixed-race character(s) is constructed as on the periphery of Japanese society. Due to their visible and marked differences, there is no way for that position to change, though some mixed-race Japanese that can exhibit desirable traits (i.e. white) can curry some social currency; however, this comes at the cost of their personhood as their value becomes reduced to their body. Class, both the actual relation to the middle-class and perceived proximity to the upper-class also structures the positionality of mixed-race Japanese. Some of these films were created with the intent to portray sympathetic or positive images of mixed-race Japanese, however, the creation of positive images does not negate the power of a system that contrives positive/negative binaries. The postwar restructuring of the narratives Japan told about itself (i.e., monoracial, middle-class) underpinned both the popular and official understandings of mixed-race subjectivity. Films about mixed-race Japanese, though created ostensibly for entertainment, can add contextualization and nuance to the study of their history, bridging official and first-person narratives by bringing in one designed for the general public.

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