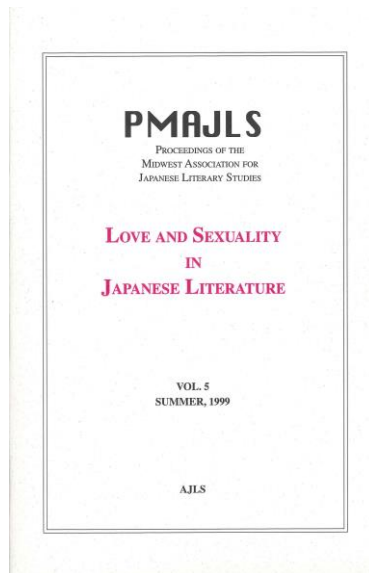


“Confession and Exposure: Nagasawa Mitsuo’s
Adult Video Actresses and Japan’s Male Intellectual
Consciousness”

Inaga Shigemi 

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**CONFESSION AND EXPOSURE:
NAGASAWA MITSUO'S ADULT VIDEO ACTRESSES
AND JAPAN'S MALE INTELLECTUAL CONSCIOUSNESS¹**

Inaga Shigemi
International Research Center for Japanese Studies

A BOOK OF SENSATION

Nagasawa Mitsuo's *AV Joyū* (Adult Video Actress[es]) was published on April 1996 and became a bestseller. Composed of 42 interviews with (ex-) "adult video actresses" in Japan, the book was 573 pages thick, and cost 2,800 yens (about \$26.00). To the astonishment of the author himself, who had not expected to sell more than 2,000 copies, the first 7,000 copies were sold out within a month and the book went through 7 printings within a year, with final sales totaling more than 45,000 copies. At the end of 1996, the book was nominated as one of the best books of the year by several critics. In the meantime, numerous book reviews had appeared in most of the main (so-called high-quality) Japanese newspapers which had heretofore refrained from dealing with publications related to the adult video industry for fear of violating the self-imposed code of public morality. By Oct. 28, 1997, the publisher, Village Center Inc., listed 68 book reviews. Amazed by this unexpected success, the publisher decided to make excerpts of these reviews available on its home page.²

According to this homepage, *AV Joyū* was the author's first book. The author, Nagasawa Mitsuo, was born in Osaka in 1959 and grew up in Sendai. After quitting Osaka University of Fine Arts, he worked as an editor of pornographic publications at Byakuya Shobō for seven years before becoming a free-lancer. Since 1989, he has continued to interview

¹I am indebted to Miyachi Naoko for her "Reading Review articles of AV Actress[es], Politics of the involved: culture, ethics and psychopathology," an oral report delivered at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, May 30, 1998, and for the discussion that followed. Dr. Miyachi enlightened me as regards the book as well as the book reviews. My thanks also go to Prof. Washida Kiyokazu and Morioka Masahiro who kindly communicated to me their copies of book reviews. I am also grateful to Prof. Sekine Eiji. Without his invitation to Purdue University, I would have never had the chance to write this essay.

²The excerpts of the review articles can be identified and consulted by contacting the Village Center homepage: <<http://www.villagecenter.co.jp/book.html>>.

adult video actresses for articles inserted in monthly AV magazines such as *Video-The-World* and *AV Idaten Jōhō*: his articles fill up the empty margins surrounding erotic photos. The copy of Nagasawa's book which I finally bought to prepare this paper is the 8th printing, issued on Dec. 6, 1997. In this essay I am going to use the above-mentioned excerpts of review articles, as well as the book itself, as primary materials for my analysis. Why was this book so highly appreciated? Without pretending (or being able to pretend) in any sense to be a privileged "informant," I will try to answer this question by summarizing the reactions the book provoked. Or more precisely, I will have to present the difficulty I have in struggling to incorporate these materials into a scholarly presentation.

It is therefore entirely up to the readers to judge if my attempt has something to do with the study of "Love and Sexuality in Japanese Literature." Still, it would not be useless to quote from Ōtsuki Takahiro (or Ryūkan) (1957–), folklorist specializing in the contemporary Japanese popular culture, who initially promoted the book-form publication of these quasi-underground interviews ignored by the mainstream media. Ōtsuki judged them as enormous achievements which would become very important folkloric materials in 50 years (558). In his commentary ("kaisetsu") at the end of the book, Ōtsuki claims that if he were capable of handling English bilingually, he would be glad to translate the whole book into English and then ask Studs Turkel to read it (572). Thus, Ōtsuki expresses his high valuation of the book's quality.

In his review, Takahashi Gen'ichirō, a writer (and now better known as a TV horse race critique), completely agrees with Ōtsuki and discusses Nagasawa's uniqueness as an interviewer. While Studs Turkel stoically pursues the truth he believes in through his meticulous interviews of ordinary people, and Andy Warhol unveiled truths of his celebrity guests' life styles through his witty conversations with them, Nagasawa lets his guest actresses express their true feelings and dreams by responding to them with his reserved yet strong sympathy toward them" [*Shūkan Asahi*, Nov.11,'96 (48)]³. I will argue that these statements, though relevant to a certain extent, do not fully make justice to the book.

³In the following passages, the references are given between brackets: the name of the periodicals followed by the legal date of publication. The number in parentheses () refers back to the number. on the list of review articles in the appendix. The entry number of these articles respects that of the chronological listings in the Village Center homepage (the newest is on the top, the oldest on the bottom).

ADVERTISEMENT, REACTIONS, AND BACKGROUND

Having dispensed with the necessary foreplay, let me now penetrate into the subject matter at hand. I first quote from publisher's advertisement on its home page: "Here are irreplaceable life histories told by adult video actresses—they talk about their birth, family, friends, love, sex, rebellion, drugs, as well as their work in the adult video industry. Here are fully detailed accounts of the experiences the girls have never before revealed. You will hear in this book voices from the bottom of the earth which seem to say, 'Please always remember me, who, as a person, once lived this way in this world.'"

Shortly after the book's publication, an editor of *The Asahi Newspaper's* review section recommended it in the following manner: "Here are self-portraits of forty-two AV actresses. Some pretend and some are straightly frank. The author/interviewer gently interacts with his guests, who try to find, awkwardly yet seriously, words that can express their truths. Aren't these actresses the mirror that reflects the very picture of our distorted age? Whether you are an AV fan or totally against that genre, you should read this book so as to ponder the seriousness of our own problems as revealed in the problems of the AV industry." [*Asahi Shinbun*, May 5, '96 (2)].

Undoubtedly, one of the reasons for this book's success derives from the fact that it sharply betrayed the stereotypes commonly associated with AV actresses and the industry they belonged. In this regard, the "obi" (a "belt" that wraps the bottom part of a dust-jacket and is used to advertise the book) plays an efficiently ambiguous role. On the *obi* we read the following words: "A collection of interviews with adult video actresses from 1990 through 1996. Documents of the girls who live our contemporary time." These catch phrases are followed by quotes from some interviews included in the book [in parentheses are given their stage/code names]: "When feeling better by sniffing paint thinner, I feel like I need warmth of other person's body" (Fujioka Miku); "I have learned many things a child need not know" (Fubuki Anna) [Contrary to the assumptions most likely to occur in the mind of the casual *obi* reader, she is not speaking here of sexual experiences; as it turns out, read within its context in the book, this sentence refers to the disaster of the actress' family, including her personal experience with child abuse, incest, the divorce of her parents, and her mother's narcotics addictions]; "I really love to suck *ochinchins* (Nagashima Aya) [The word "ochinchin" on the *obi* is shockingly eye-catching when the copies of the book are displayed on a bookstore shelf. Note that the belt itself was "awarded" a prize for its excellent copy (*Da Vinci*, Aug., '98 (30)].

On the back cover, we can find continuous quotes from the contents, consisting of a balanced mixture of intelligent phrases and obscene or scatological remarks: "Probably I haven't made love spiritually, and needless to say, never physically" (Fujita Rina; the only actress who has confessed her profession to her father); "After his death, I wanted to feel the pain of my *yakuza* boyfriend and had the same peony and butterfly tattoo as his on my thigh" (Matsumoto Tomi). "School? Of course I refused to go." (Arimori Rei). "I want to work at an intelligence office in order to find the true assassin of J.F.K." (Sakurai Mizuho, clearly one of the most intelligent persons among the interviewees). "A medical student I met in a telephone club initiated me into the pleasure of anal sex" (Nanjō Rei, famous for her particularly perverse video performances—she will be discussed in further detail at the end of this paper). "I decided that I wouldn't need a word to speak to other people on this earth" (Kawakami Miku, as a child she was autistic mainly because of her complicated family situation, and was once diagnosed as a schizophrenic. When she was in kindergarten, her fairy-like innocence belied her trouble-making pyromania). "I love to treat naughty girls like slaves commanding them to kneel down at my feet" (Hidaka Saya, convinced of her devotion to sado-masochism).

The quote following Hidaka Saya's on the book's back cover comes from actress Fuyuki Azusa. Though the copy which presents this quote cannot be properly translated into English, the book provides the reader with explanatory notes on the Hiroshima dialect which she speaks; "I was doing a b.m. [i.e. discharging excrement or evacuating the bowels] when letting an explosive sound out in front of all these eyes that were fixed on me" (Nara Shino); The final quote sounds like a very ordinary girl's dream expressed in a naively romantic fashion: "I want my marriage to be filled with love even if we are poor" (Ozawa Natsumi). In the book, the reader learns that this quote was made by a 23 year-old girl, who had been raped daily by her step-father and his brother; her father committed suicide after divorcing her mother, and she herself was forced to have three abortions. This knowledge of her background suddenly changes the meaning of her naive sounding remarks (her case will be discussed later in this paper).

"Those readers who wanted to satisfy their voyeuristic curiosities, expecting to find in the book obscene confessions made by their favorite partners for their masturbation ["ona-petto (onanism-pets)" in Japanese], shall find these expectations totally betrayed" [*Asahi Shinbun*, May 5, '96 (11)]. "Starting to read out of mere curiosity, you will soon be intensely absorbed by the book. [You will find out how] earnestly and cou-

rageously these actresses live in their incredibly harsh realities" *Hanako*, May 30, '96, (8)]; they had to overcome in the pandemonium of this earthly existence.

In *Tokyo Shinbun* [July 14, '96 (31)] an anonymous journalist writes: "Though I picked up the book merely out of curiosity, imagining I was taking a quick peek into something dreadful, I soon found myself at the end of the book, having read the whole thing at a dreadful pace, pushed by its powerful impact. I was really surprised to see that within the former half of their life, these young women at the age of twenty, or even younger, have already undergone such hideous experiences. These stories are almost unbelievably uncanny."

In the same line, a non-fiction writer, Ikue Yūji, also represents naive reaction typical of many reviewers: "Usually, we conceive a cheap and selfish sympathy for these adult video actresses, saying to ourselves, 'Why is such a beautiful girl [the term used here in the Japanese original is one which is already stigmatized and forbidden by Japanese feminists] sacrificing herself to such a profession?' But I was taken aback by this book, filled with horrifying and hideous confessions" [*Shūkan Asahi*, Oct. 11, '96 (44)].

Of course, these hidden details of the pretended "real life" of the girls can add a supplementary dimension to the voyeuristic curiosity. "There certainly must be readers interested in the real face and career of the girls which have been kept concealed behind the video screens" [*Shūkan Yomiuri*, Sep. 8, '96 (39)]. "Even if you are not adult-video fanatics, you will be absorbed in reading it." This statement implies that the atrocities of their "real" life stories would not deduce even an ounce from the fanatic readers' sexual desire. On the contrary, this journalist invents the following ingenious narrative to reinforce the fantasy: "Their unfortunate years of girlhood secretly prepared their calculated decision of becoming consumer goods of sexual desire" [*Jitsuwa Press*, Sep. 13, '96 (37)].

As a typical consumer, Kiritōshi Risaku does not put into doubt his way of consumption: "Evidently, these are interviews that originally appeared on pornographic magazines. They are not directly eliciting masturbation, but they are none the less aimed at soliciting the readers' virtual enjoyment of adult video movies further, by offering semi-realistic, yet semi-fictional, stories about the girls they know well on the video screen" [*Hato yo!*, Jul. '96 (21)] This commentary typical of a male insider of the AV world. Further, a review by Yūki Shūji shamelessly confesses, without noticing his insensitivity, that after reading the book, he immediately went to the video rental shop and borrowed videos starred by the actresses included in the book [*WinComer*, Aug. '98,(29)].

In front of these “masculine” sexual desires—and in this context only—the warning made by Morioka Masahiro, a specialist of the bioethics, is relevant. Morioka points out the simple fact that the interviews, however serious, are manipulated by the logic of show-business and incorporated into the network of mass-consumption, which encourages the arousal of male sexual desire. “What matters most is that we scrutinize our own (male) sexuality and think about our own (male) sexual excitement in front of the AV screen. Any dogmatic criticism of the AV phenomena, which skips this process of self-reflection, would be meaningless” [*Asahi Shinbun*, June 2, '96 (15)]. It might be noteworthy to mention here, that a heated discussion occurred among members of the editorial committee as to whether or not it would be appropriate to include this book in the review column of the Sunday edition of the *Asahi News Paper*, and that, for lack of space, under strict self-imposed regulation of the “equal length” policy, one passage of Morioka’s original essay did not survive in the published version].

The difference in reactions among reviewers derives partly from the diverse variety of media and their target readers. On the one hand, *Ehime Shinbun*, as a decent public newspaper, talks about “the reportage of 42 unknown girls” [June 30, '96 (27)], thus displaying their ignorance of the interviewees. On the other hand, *Weekly Play Boy* emphasizes, to the contrary, readers’ intimacy with the “unknown girls” in question: “You cannot judge the book from the cover photography. Listen to RAW voices of these angels, by whom you, the readers, have surely had yourselves taken care of [euphemism for onanism-inciting nude pin-ups] [June 3, 1996 (5)].

Still many male reviewers preferred to show (or judged it wiser to show) some signs of repentance and prescribed precautions to the ignorant future consumers. “Look out! If you only expect obscene stories, you will be betrayed” [*Shigoto no Kyōshitsu*, Oct. '96 (42)]. “As I read through the mass of these stories of the lives of Father Fxxxers, lived in a Uchida Shungiku’s-like fashion, I was forced to ponder deeply over the lives of these actresses, and eventually found myself no longer capable of getting ejaculation by imagining these girls. Here is a dangerous side-effect of this book, yet I, nonetheless, strongly recommend it” [*Okay*, Oct., '98, (41)].

AUTHOR’S STRATEGY

According to the author, he deliberately edited his interviews so as not to excite reader’s desire for masturbation while reading the book. He wanted to reveal wounds and traumas hidden behind these young video

queens—behind their innocent and cute looks, or shameless, naked figures and sexy panting voices in their sexual acts on the video screens [*Tōkyō Shinbun*, Jul. 14, '96 (31)]. As Kayama Jizaburō remarks, “AV fanatics are often eager to know the ‘real’ girls behind their excessively nymphomaniacal performances” [*Hon no Zasshi*, Feb. '97 (65)]. However immaculate readers might frequently wish to believe a girl is, such notions are usually revealed as simplistic myths fostered by the male imagination. Hayashi Nozomu, bibliographer and associate professor of the Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music—and well known as a prolific essayist—remarks that this book mercilessly reveals the fictional nature of such immaculacy and chastity [in his conversation with Mori Mayumi in an influential literary P.R. magazine by Shinchōsha, *Nami*, Dec. '96 (50)]. In his review, Hayashi also underlines the uselessness of a dogmatic negation of Adult Video as a subcultural genre in the name of social morality. He concludes that “it would be much more meaningful to ponder, with the aid of this book, the tragic intensities hidden behind this base and obscene world of the adult video” [*Weekly Economist*, Nov. 11, '96 (52)].

The book's successful demythologization of AV actresses derives mainly from Nagasawa's subtle skills as an interviewer. Several critics also pay attention to the distinguished narrative technique Nagasawa mobilizes and try to describe it through a process of elimination. Yoshino Jin (1959–) recognizes in Nagasawa's narrative a “total lack of being nasty and pretentious, of looking down upon, of being driven by curiosity, of making up stories, of trying to protect the fallen and degraded girls in a paternalistic manner; instead, the author flatly describes the unbearable realities of collapsed families” [*Hatoyo!* Jan. '97 (55)]. For the lack of a better explanation, Takahashi Gen'ichirō also relies on a process of elimination: “The interviewer should not be as vulgar as TV show presenters. He should not be too sympathetic or too emotional. Curious eyes must be avoided and a neutral approach to just collect information must also be avoided. Although his articles will appear in an adult-video magazine (or rather because of that), he should not speak only of sex; he should neither be too visible nor hide too much in the shadows. In short, the task is difficult, and Nagasawa accomplished this difficult task” [*Shūkan Asahi*, Nov. 8, '96 (48)].

Reviewers find in the book something positively unconventional. A review in the austere *Japan Economic Journal* includes the following remark: “[N]ot following the conventional technique of *reportage* or non-fiction writing, the author successfully grasps the real voices” [May 19, '96 (4)]. The “absence of the typical paternalistic stance of the male

journalist" was also noted by *Kaminoge Shibun*, who underscores this comment with the observation that "the author is thoroughly scrupulous about the details of the story. Forty-two girls have forty-two totally different life histories. This simple evidence is extremely fresh for the reader of the book" [June 30, '96 (25)]. In the same vein, Takahashi continues: "Whereas we are totally brainwashed nowadays by the virtually mediated 'modernity' (. . .), I was surprised to find in the book real "human beings" who speak humanly." And Takahashi concludes, not without exaggeration: "And so, we now need a new literary genre called Nagasawa Mitsuo, a genre in which the author lets his partners to express 'human' voices in them and he responds to them as a 'human.'" [*Shūkan Asahi*, Nov. 7, '97 (68)]. (By transmitting the "fact" that a new literary genre has recently born in Japan, I hope I surely have accomplished one of the tasks as a key-note speaker).

The thickness of the book is also an intentional strategy. The author remarks: "A thin book with the same title would not have attracted any serious attention." The high price (2,800 yen) was an inevitable compensatory measure, based on the conservative assumption that the book probably would not sell over 2,000 copies. The author was therefore surprised by the wild reactions from, in particular, university professors. An example which borders on caricature can be found in the review by Wakashima Tadashi, associate professor of the Kyōto University: "My legs literary gave way when I read the book. If you read in search of bawdy or salacious matters, you will be severely punished and counterattacked" [*Asahi Shinbun*, May 27, '96 (11)].

Probably recalling Wakashima's reaction, the author is later convinced that "the intellectuals expose their weak-point in dealing with this kind of publication. I was grateful to them as they painstakingly tried to discover the book's meanings and as they attempted to understand different cases by means of classification. Still I want to say to them: 'please do not be bothered too much by this book, as it is created rather thoughtlessly.'" The editorial board of the Village Center regards the book as a kind of "litmus paper to the intellectuals" [*Jitsuwa Press*, Sep. 13, '96 (37)]. By the way, herein lies the reason why I refrain from analyzing the book itself and hereafter wish to concentrate myself on the analysis of book reviewers' reactions as manifestations of their male/female consciousness (without excluding my own, which is inevitably reflected in my assessments of these reviews).

THE MAKING OF A BEST-SELLER

Before going further, however, it would be convenient to summarize the sensations this book has periodically provoked.

"From mouth to mouth rumor of the book has rapidly spread" [*Can-Cam*, Dec. '96 (46)]. In June, editors of the monthly magazine, *More*, selected the book among the best ten masterpieces [*More*, June, '97 (67)]. By August, nearly forty review articles have appeared and Kayama Jizaburō modestly ranked the book at the ninth position in the best entertainment of the first half of the year 1996. "The author impressively gave expressions to the real voices—and not real bodies—of forty-two Adult Video actresses, who rush through their lives with a speed that transcends our ordinary expectations. The book is an epoch-making anthology of true story interviews, proving that AV magazines can produce a writer with an exceptional quality of expressiveness" [*Shūkan Gendai*, Aug. 24-31, (36): Note that Kayama is one of these writers working for the AV industry]. In the "New Year Special Issue" of the weekly *Shūkan Post*, Kayama shows his double surprise at the media reactions to the book. The articles, which are added as supplementary material to erotic photo-magazines and are constantly neglected by the mainstream media, have finally been socially recognized in the form of a "real book" and, moreover, the book compiling them has enjoyed an unprecedented appreciation [*Shūkan Post*, Jan. 10—17, '97 (63)].

By the end of 1996, no less than three newspapers selected the book as one of the best three of the year. Ōtsuki Takahiro says that "the mainstream media's support for this type of book has really given me a feeling of hope for a better society" [*Tokyo Shinbun*, Dec. 29, '96 (61)]. Fujiwara Shin'ya, photo-essayist, finds that "this book reveals the true conditions in which Japanese families have lived after WWII" [*Asahi Shinbun*, Dec. 22, '96 (59)] and Washida Kiyokazu, philosopher in aesthetics at Osaka University, "gladly sends a quiet applause to the mindful interviewer, who was capable of encouraging the young girls to express themselves through such penetrating words" [*Yomiuri Shinbun*, Dec. 22, '96 (58)]. In the "Best Entertainment of 1996" column, Taguchi Kumiko, working in a bookshop in Ikebukuro, Tokyo, sends, as a woman, her cheers to the interviewees of Nagasawa's book [*Shūkan Gendai*, Jan. 4–11, '97 (60)]. A singer, Nagasaku Hiromi (1970-), chooses the *Adult Video Actresses* as "one of the best three books, which are easy, yet profound, to read," and finds in the book "a spiritual direction for me to follow as an actress" [*ChouChou*, Jan. 8, '97 (57)]. *Da Capo* ranks the book among the four best, because of the book's "such seriousness and realness, which make the readers feel so sad" [Jan. 1, '97 (56)]. *Hato-yo!* also ranks the book as

the best four [selected by Yoshino Jin in Jan, '97 (55)]. A mystery writer, Naka Hidehiro, nominates the book for the number one slot, because it looks "far more superior to any fiction published this year" [*Kono mystery ga sugoi*, 1997 edition (54)].

Before analyzing in detail the pathologies of the society which the book successfully reveals, let us investigate these reviewers' subjective opinions, which are useful in helping to understand the general tone of the book's reception.

"Warm description of these actresses, who try to live positively" [*Tokyo Walker*, June 4, '96 (12)]. "[A] pale, yet sure, taste remains, emanating in your heart a mysterious and pleasant sympathy" [a *reportage* movie director, Hayashi Kazuo, *Shūkan Post*, June 7, '96 (9)]. "[A]n affectionate attitude to life, warm and touching encounters with different people—an excitement that is difficult to explain (Yūki Shūji: *Win-Comer*, Aug. '98)(29). "[U]ncomparably refreshing" [*Tokyo Shinbun*, Jul. 14, '96 (31)]. "[R]eading such sad and painful accounts of the adolescence of the girls creates a strange emotion in the readers' innermost heart" [usually very male chauvinistic *Shūkan Hōseki*, Sep. 12, '96 (40)]. "The most popular book among the male readers in 1996. The secret truths surprise us and then convince us of their truth. (. . .) Also, highly recommended to female readers" [*World Chintai Clip*, No.1, '97 (64)].

A somewhat isolated short insinuation to a certain sexual tendencies is made by a certain Yamase Yoiko (who could be a female pen-name of a disguised male editor, or may be a gay critic, or more likely a Lesbian writer), in a column named "Sisters' Love Report Book Guide" corner of *Lady's Comic*: "it is remarkable that many of these actresses have female homosexual experiences, either in their private lives or in their business situations" [*Lady's Comic*, Nov. '96 (45)].

Kawakatsu Masayuki, for his part, does not conceal his middle-age crisis in terms of his male consciousness. "(The author is) somewhat tired of life, but not yet completely resigned to his fate. This stance to his own life heightens the intensity of the book. An ideal pillow book for those male readers who have begun to find it too hard to 'do' twice per night" [*TV Bros*, Nr.22, June, '96 (24)]. Dekune Tatsurō, an Akutagawa Prize winner and a second hand book-shop owner, represents the interest of a somewhat older generation: "nice analects professed by contemporary Japanese women around 20 years of age" [*Shūkan Bunshun*, Aug. 1, '96 (33)].

In between, the following poetical description presents the average of the critical spectrum: "Dramatic episodes keep falling on us [as if from the sky]. Miseries and comedies of the human existences smell with ex-

ceptional fragrance and move us deeply, without our clear understanding of the book's explosive power" [*Brutus*, June 15, '96 (13)]. These remarks could serve for a background to our further investigation.

FROM THE INITIAL SHOCK TO CONTEMPLATION

More than the confessions by these Adult Video actresses themselves, it is the commentaries on their confessions that reveal the social realities in terms of Japan's critical consciousness (or lack of it). In a direct connection with Nagasawa's book, only one extensive article on the adult video industry has been published so far: "AV Actresses, Whose Sadness Soon Turns Into Pitiful Pain," by Inaba Mayumi, who somehow, incidentally, is not a male, but a female critic [*Shinchō* 45, Feb. '96 pp. 176-184 (49)]. Previously, Inaba had written a book review in the *Sankei Newspaper*.

The book touched me profoundly and put me into contemplation. When I read these interviews for the first time in the magazines, I was shocked and totally overwhelmed, as it surpassed the limit of my imagination. To smooth down the shock, I told to myself that these stories couldn't be true. There were rapes, swappings, orgies, sadomasochism, and all other kind of pervasive sexual experiences. The life stories told by these teenager girls are so weird that people could barely expect that these are records of old women at the end of their miserable and troublesome lives. [*Sankei Shinbun*, May 20, '96 (6)]

"Undeniably, one of the most deep-rooted social problems—the so-called 'collapse of the family' in contemporary Japanese society—is intensely revealed as a hidden side of the Adult Video industry. No Japanese woman at the age of twenty can speak of as many personal calamities as these who are working for the adult video industry" [*Jitsuwa Press*, Sep. 13 '96 (37)]. These remarks, with an unusually serious tone for a weekly magazine that collects obscene and gossipy true stories, are quoted affirmatively by Yū Miri, a *zainichi* Korean writer and a winner of the Akutagawa Literary Prize. She has experienced extremely harsh attacks by the Japan's right-wing groups, as well as by some of her own compatriots, who believe that her literary works are more shameful and humiliating in that they promote Korean-Japanese pride and identity.

"While reading the book, my younger sister, who, as an actress, once showed her full nude body on the screen, murmured to me, 'I haven't been as bold as they are'" [*Shūkan Bunshun*, July, 25, '96 (32)]. This

remark suggests certain envy or jealousy on the part of Yū's sister vis-à-vis the actresses remaining in the underground industry. *Monthly Takarajima* suggests a similar sentiment: "The girls working in Adult Video are all good-natured. Probably I am the only one with a bad personality," says Hirooka Mirai [the only interviewee, with her nude photo in the book]. It's true, despite her own words, that Mirai is no exception. Working in the underworld of sex is certainly not as miserable as it had been in the old days, . . . The author of the book interviews these actresses so intimately as to make other fans feel jealous of him" [May 15, '96 (1)]. Sharing the same ambivalent adoration, Yū Miri continues:

It is true that a huge quantity of adult videos is circulating among male clientele, but little is known about the actresses starring on these videos. This book (. . .) reveals these stars' past, their choice of becoming an AV actress, and the feeling they had by exposing their own naked body in performing sexual plays in front of the video cameras. (. . .) It gives me a tense emotion when I see an actress, Miss Arimori Rei, stress that she is proud of being an AV actress while at the same time saying that she cannot stand being looked down on. Forty-two lives, included in this book, are beyond expectations of any ordinary women; they attract me tremendously as if I were reading good short stories. [Shūkan Bunshun, July, 25, '96 (32)]

Strangely enough, it isn't only writers like Yū Miri who have such reactions; non-fiction writers, as well, sense in these interviews a certain similarity to fiction. Tachibana Takashi, non-fiction writer of high reputation, famous for his penetrating reports into the hidden sanctuaries of Japanese politics and society, remarks that "each of these interviews is as profound as a full-length novel" [*Shūkan Bunshun*, Aug.1, '96 (33)]; Might not this remark amount to declaring the imminent demise of his own profession?

BEYOND REALITIES AND FICTIONS

Voyeuristic curiosity, couched in the rhetoric secret realities revealed (e.g. "You can get a glance of their real unpainted face, the truth of the contemporary women pursuing the profession of Adult Video actresses. . . . read about the realities of the AV actresses, which have been concealed behind the video screen" [*Nighter Sports*, May 23, '96 (3)]), rapidly gave way. Instead, many reviewers begin to manifest their uncertainty by finding themselves at ambiguous boundaries between truth

and fiction. "Reading through the tapestries woven by the author, one is caught by the reversed illusion: it is probably the video tapes that represent the reality whereas it is this series of interviews that are pure fictions [whereby the reviewer is implying that his illusion is false]. Despite its sensational title, the content is extremely hard-boiled. One cannot help feeling a tenacious will of the author to record by words [what is concealed beneath] the visual experience of our age [which adult video tapes procure for us]" [*Ehime Shinbun, Kanagawa Shinbun*, June 30, '96 (27/28)].

Wakashima Tadashi also makes reference to what he sees as the fictional qualities inherent in the book, by way of explaining the fascination the book has evoked from more literature-oriented intellectuals. "Extremely crude and fresh but extremely fictional. I wonder if these stories in movable type are real images or ghost images. Fluctuating in between, the book is no less interesting than a fully developed novel" [*Asahi Shinbun*, May 5, '96 (11)]. The predilection for fictionality is a reverse side of the regressive retreat from the incredible realities. To counterbalance this regression, Kiritōshi Risaku offers a compensatory rationalization, for convenience sake, "Just as the actresses in the medieval period worked as prostitutes behind the stage, so it comes as no surprise to see the recurrence of this same primordial scene in our Adult Video age!! The ambiguity between reality and fiction does not diminish the essential value of the interview as folkloric document (as Ōtsuki Ryūkan has pointed out); for the historical truth resides in what the people of a certain epoch want to talk about—among themselves and about themselves" [*Hato yo!* July, '96 (21)].

Fiction itself constitutes an integral part of the reality we live. This seemingly sharp and clever re-definition of reality (which reminds us of the controversy between Hyden White and Carlo Ginsberg in terms of historical reality) also reveals another intellectual pathology: the desire for scholarly documentation. "Through this book you can discover an unknown Japan. This fact alone justifies its distinctive value as a document for folklore studies. *Father Fxxxer* [by Uchida Shungiku] amounts to nothing when compared to this extraordinary book. (. . .) And, lo! You can finish this thick book in the twinkling of an eye" [*Leaf*, Dec. '96 (47)]. This passage serves, itself, as a document. It makes us understand what remains "an unknown Japan" to these Japanese writers at the end of the twentieth century, and to what extent it fascinates them.

Asayama Minoru suggests that the fragility of the borderline that separates the normal life from the abnormal one indicates a symptom of our age. "We have the world of AV [adult video] and that of OL [office

ladies]. The seemingly solid door that separates the two worlds can, however, be easily opened, and the worlds interchanged with each other. The book sheds an interesting light on the ambivalent choice available to the contemporary young women" [*Shūkan Asahi*, June 7, '96 (18)]. To elucidate the mechanism of the border-crossing, Nishizawa Akihiko develops a sociological thesis on the border politics of normality (which reminds us Pierre Bourdieu):

By talking about sexuality in terms of prostitution, one is inevitably involved with the politics of border-crossing between the normal and abnormal. These politics seems to be quite important for us, and to a certain extent, markets of language are constituted based on these politics. Those who observe and speak, view themselves as representative of the norm, and either emphasize the abnormalities of those who are observed and spoken of, or, on the contrary, try to distinguish normal qualities among those whom they are observing and speaking of. In either case, all that matters is the security of the observing/speaking group—the group being observed contributes merely by reinforcing the stability of the binary politics, based on the prefabricated distinction between what is normal and abnormal (. . .)

Though limited in number, those actresses who live in the Adult Video world point to this abnormal and concealed world which spreads apart from their own daily lives. Their narrative inevitably reveals this world which has not been frequently talked about. In this other world, the secure normality does not exist. Rather, there exist intact, hidden, and unbearable realities, which have been ignored by the normal world for the sake of its own security. (. . .) By giving voice to this hidden world, one can of course find neither "security" nor "normality." Still, one is provided here with at least the possibility of re-encountering human lives by taking critical distance from the fallacious sexuality. [*Studio Voice*, July, '96 (14) which has been protected under the border politics of normality]

Nishizawa's framework provides us with theoretical background to justify Inaba Mayumi's empirical observation as well as Hara Kazuo's sense of reality: "In these teenagers' confessions, I [Inaba] could catch better than any other social criticism the smell of the real Japanese society of the '90s. These life stories are at the same time autobiographies and criticism of the society" [*Sankei Shibun*, May 20, '96 (6)]. "The

thickness and depth of 600 pages have their own values, says documentary film director, Hara Kazuo, and the total of each person's experience stuffed into this quality begins to emanate a common message giving a concrete shape to contemporary Japan in which we live" [*Shūkan Post*, June 7 '96 (9)].

REVOLT, TRANSGRESSION, OR TEMPORAL ASYLUM ?

Still, the reason why these teenagers have chosen adult video jobs remains to be explained. Kiritōshi Risaku satisfies himself with his own way of reformulating the message: "Here are stories of the girls who, after having been raped by their step-fathers, betrayed by their boyfriends and intoxicated by paint thinner, are healed through the abnormal sex of the adult video" [*Hato yo!* July, '96 (21)]; he thereby cunningly justifies the male consumers' sexual desire. In contrast, Inaba Mayumi does not conceal her bewilderment: "I was troubled by the fact that the girls having undergone atrocities in their childhood, finally found in the adult video industry the place for their cure and healing" [*Sankei Shibun*, May 20, '96 (6)]. "Reading through the book, I [Inaba] noticed that in most of the cases the girls have finally found a place of salvation in being an AV actress, after having been abused by [almost unbelievable atrocities] within their often complicated family environments, conflicts of their parents and pressure from conservative social conventions" [*Shinchō* 45, Dec. '96 (49)].

Though Nagasawa himself does not develop the idea of "cure" in his book, during an interview after the books' publication, he did offer some circumstantial evidence. When he began interviewing in 1990, most of the Adult Video actresses regarded their profession as a transitory step towards becoming "real" actresses. However, since 1993 the situation has irrevocably changed. Because of the mass-mobilization of more than 1,000 actresses, and ceaselessly accelerating mass-consumption (more than 400 videos were released each month in 1994 for the legal market alone, not to mention the black market, for which statistics are not available), any chance that might previously existed for an AV actress to achieve fame, let alone legitimacy, has become increasingly remote, especially since the industry was hit by the so-called collapse of the bubble economy, and itself deteriorated in terms of the actresses' working conditions and potential income.

Successes such as that of Kobayashi Hitomi, the legendary AV queen of the early 80s who earned 400,000 yen per movie and became a millionaire, are now a thing of the past. Along with the decline of the industry itself, the "span of life" of an individual actress has considerably

shortened, and the chance of converting themselves into famous actresses, as in the case of Iijima Ai, is now practically unthinkable. According to Nagasawa, today's AV actresses are very well aware of their situations. When they come to this business, they already expect that their career will be short, and they are ready to be satisfied with their status as short-term consumer goods, only to disappear after an ephemeral period of obscure popularity. Knowing that they cannot assert themselves fully by being a star in this field, they nevertheless decide to stay in the business for a provisional and transitory period of their lives [*Jitsuwa Press*, Sep. 13 '96 (37); *Heaven*, Sep. 20, '96 (38); *Weekly Spa!*, Nov. 11, '96 (51). Also refer to Inaba's article in *Shinchō* 45, Dec., '96 (49)].

After listening to their confessions, Nagasawa is convinced that "somehow the choice [of becoming an AV actress] was no less a hazard than a necessity, a necessary passage without which they could not have saved their own lives" [*Jitsuwa Press*, Sep. 13, '96 (37)]. "For those who have undergone atrocious childhoods, becoming an AV actress simply provides a means by which to be protected in a shelter. To be able to earn money and to be protected by a friendly staff—these are luxuries, the likes of which they have never before experienced. It is a dream-come-true for them, even if it is just momentary" [*Heaven*, Sep. 20, '96 (38)]. "Their career as a movie star is ephemeral. One year at the longest, and six months on the average. I get the impression that the girls are tasting their tiny moments of spotlight as the most precious gift given by God" [*Weekly Asahi Geinō*, Aug. 15, '96 (34)].

The ephemerality of their profession is instinctively grasped by the writer Kobayashi Nobuhiko: "Prostitution will never disappear, but the profession of the Adult Video actress will be gone before long. And that ephemerality dominates the book. After having read through more than 550 pages, the ephemeral and sad after-taste only remains as a conclusive truth" [*Shūkan Bunshun*, Oct. 3, '96 (43)]. Whether Kobayashi's forecast turns out to be true or false, it must be noted that the touch of "ephemerality," as well as the idea of "asylum," seems to be first formulated in a subtle and precise way by Washida Kiyokazu: "Most of the girls regard the profession as a point of passage. In a sense, they are only ephemeral consumer goods to be cast off like trash out of recycling. But there are some who managed to repair their abused childhood by the emergency asylum, otherwise known as the Adult Video industry." [*Yomiuri Shibun*, Mai 26, '96 (10)].

However, if the business of being adult video actresses is only an "emergency asylum," how, then, is the return from the asylum to the "normal world" possible?

Almost unanimously, these Adult Video actresses recount their dreams of returning to the normal existence of an ordinary girl, having earned enough money to run their own small stand or snack-bar, which they hope to someday keep in company with their future husband. How wide is the gap between their extreme reality as Adult Video actresses and their commonplace dream of becoming a "normal" and ordinary person? What is symbolically reflected here is, quite possibly, the topography of the mental landscape of our age. [*Nikkan Gendai*, June 6, '96 (16)]

A female student contributor to the *Hokkaidō University News* insightfully points out the fact that "while most of these actresses are so avid for love, they are usually insensitive to sex," and remarks on this curious complementarity the actresses are obliged to assume vis-à-vis the "normal world," whereas "we are not so much concerned about love as being sensitive to sex" [*Hokkaidō Daigaku Shinbun*, No. 944, Feb. 25, '97 (66)]. How can this asymmetrical contrast be resolved?

CONFESSION, COMPLICITY AND CURE

"What intrigued me most," says Inagaki Mayumi, "was that these girls, who had experienced sexual abuses and incest, caused by their own fathers, step-fathers and several males, returned to sex, instead of avoiding it. Instead of hating to have sex, viewing it as something dirty, they seem to voluntarily heal themselves through sex. And they have learned to speak of their own trauma as if it were somebody else's affair. 'I am really grateful to these SM play opportunities. Since my childhood I have never been allowed to cry loudly. But during the SM performances, you can cry as much as you want when you feel pain or humiliation. I feel like SM finally gave me freedom to fully express my pain. Without knowing SM practices, I would have driven myself crazy (Fubuki Anna) [p. 257]'" [*Shinchō* 45, Dec. '96 (49)]. "Like some sort of sediment," confesses Washida Kiyokazu, "these girls' words settled heavily on my heart, and I couldn't continue without giving myself a break fairly frequently" [*Yomiuri Shibun*, Mai 26, '96 (10)].

Clearly there are two distinctive phases in the curing process: (1) a phase involving liberation from the trauma, and (2) the confession of this

liberation. Yet the first cannot be reconstituted without the second. Or, more precisely, without confession, the liberation from the trauma cannot be perceived as a story. We find here an as yet unnoticed importance of Nagasawa's interviews.

"Half of the girls I interviewed," Nagasawa remarks, "have experienced such extreme sufferings that if they were boys, it would not be surprising to find cases of suicide, criminality or toxicomania. But none of the girls talked about their past in a miserable and unhappy fashion. Each of these girls is good at deriving happiness from the tiniest details. Just one moment after being xxxed by her own father, a girl says she found happiness when a breeze through the window touched her face. They are not dreamers, but I did find them to be rather greedy for happiness. They are mentally robust and strong-minded so as to confront the sly and cruel society of grown-ups" [*Tokyo Shinbun; Chūnichi Shinbun*, Jul.14, '96 (31)].

To understand the "robustness" of the AV actresses, it would be useful to quote from Tazaki Hideaki, a literary and social critic with a Lacanian background, who proposes an ontological philosophy of history: "I was enlightened and encouraged by the words pronounced by these young ladies of twenty or so years of age. It is probably because their lives are not made out of independent and separable fragments but that every component of their lives is strongly interwoven so as to constitute, as a whole, the 'thickness' of time which guarantees their 'present.' If every moment of a life is self-sufficient, it would be easy to be momentarily euphoric, but if you are under the burden of your own past, you cannot keep alive the 'will to happiness' without giving integrity and significance to your own past, even by force. And that force is emanating, undoubtedly, from their confessions" [*Music Magazine*, July, '96 (22)]. We can detect here a taste of Charles Péguy's philosophy of history.

The film director, Hara Kazuo, famous for his real-time documentary of a dying Inoue Mitsuharu, also compares the endeavor with the work of Studs Turkel, and could not hide his temptation to shoot a documentary film based on the book. His understanding of the role of confession is revealing: "Excessive and explicit technique tends to give a bad taste, but Nagasawa's interviews never commit that error. People have an impetus to confess, and, as it appears in Christianity, confession can result in relaxing and loosening up one's mental knots. While knowing well that there are many things you cannot communicate by words, the author succeeds in knitting stories through a sort of complicity with his interviewees. The somewhat affectionately dull, middle-aged-ness adds subtle sea-

soning to the interviewer. To assume the role of a *pierrrot* to make the interviewee more attractive is not a technique, but the minimum prerequisite of the manners to be respected" [*Shūkan Post*, June 7, '96 (9)].

At this stage, where the complicity of the interviewer plays a vital role in the "conception" (in its strong sense) of the life story, Morioka Masahiro's warning remark regarding the manipulation of show-business seems no longer valid nor relevant: "We should not forget, however, the plain fact that this attempt to grasp the real image of the adult video actresses [through interviews] is itself a show-business targeting of male readers. What is hidden behind the interview—however closely it copies these ladies' realities—is a kind of 'confession game,' a play flattering the selfish male desire to possess indecent ladies" [*Asahi Shinbun*, June 2, '96 (15)]. This affected manner of self-righteousness betrays a shortsightedness to the possible effect that confessions can exercise. Washida Kiyokazu's sensitive commentary is a helpful remedy in this context:

Those ladies who had lived scarcely twenty years on earth begin to talk, little by little, about their excessively dense life story with such a tone of thirst for love, mingled with a withered and tired heart. Awkwardly but surely, the author Nagasawa receives and catches these fragments of words, finally fallen down from the mouths of these girls, [many of whom are too much burdened by the trouble in their family, dating from early childhood]. These voices, coming from the abyss of the struggle for life, are astonishingly frank and straightforward. This adds to the fatigue concealed behind the words. Pronounced in a heavy fatigue, these words cannot slip frivolously or flippantly. [*Yomiuri Shibun*, May 26, '96 (10)]

Washida's interpretation is probably based on the idea of "clinical philosophy" he is proposing, as a technology of mental care and spiritual cure following the "midwifery" of the Socratic tradition. Washida seems to find in Hirasawa's "conspiracy" with interviewees a precious record of clinical discourse put into praxis. Tazaki Hideaki's confession of his envy of the interviewer also shows his understanding of the role of the mediator: "I am sincerely filled with envy of the author's capacity for extracting such highly charged words from his interviewees with such consistency and quality. Good narratives are born from a good listener, who is capable of waking up the desire of confession. I know well the difficulty (and am convinced of it by my own incapacity of doing so whenever I read the reports presented by my own students at the end of

every semester)" [*Music Magazine*, July, '96 (22)]. It turns out that the mediator himself is involved in the process of healing. Nagasawa's own confession as a confessor gains a highly heuristic value.

Nagasawa reveals: "it takes three or four hours before an interviewee's face relaxes, and good stories finally begin to appear from her mouth. (. . .) By trying to make oneself understood, one can finally begin to understand oneself objectively. The act of talking has, by itself, a healing effect, and lately I am convinced, with awe, of the enormous power that words can exercise, (. . .) At first, I was simply talking about myself under the pretence of the interview. But somebody reproached me, saying that nobody was interested in me, and it was a revelation. Ignore yourself and try to cling to your interviewees, and forbid yourself even the slightest empathy toward them, however you are moved to tears—these are the mottoes of my writing" [*Jiyū Jikan*, June 20, '96 (17)].

GENESIS OF EX-PRESSION AS EXPOSED PRIVACY

Forcing a confession can of course constitute a violation of privacy. To this ethical question, Hara Kazuo poses an astonishing question. "Does privacy belong to an individual only? Aren't obscure complexities of the society condensed in the innermost private part of an individual? If so, a documentary artist needs to always ponder whether or not the private pictures he has documented about his target persons are sharable by us all. (. . .) Shameful things and things to be hidden are powerful when they are forced to be exposed. [When I read Nagasawa's book], I was pleasantly impressed by this kind of powerfulness conveyed by the words of the interviewed actresses" [*Shūkan Post*, June 7, '96 (9)]. Ethics of intervention, questioned by Hara, is elaborated by Tazaki Hideaki by referring to what I would call the "narratology of transfer."

When the author claims that he loves AV actresses and not AV itself, what he protects, then, is [not only] the "experience" of the "I" [that the actresses establish in the course of their interviews in complicity with the "I" of the interviewer, but also of the "I" of the author himself] [Nagasawa thus shares "his" privacy with "their" exposed privacies, in Hara's sense]. The author's personal history is mobilized here in such a way as to save the actresses' individualities from being engulfed by the impersonality of the adult video tapes, which serve to satisfy the anonymous and collective male sexual desire. The author's tacit reference to his own personal history thus allows him to reserve

a privileged space for each of the life histories of the actresses. But his “love” for the actresses based on such an insertion of the author’s “I” inevitably shows a fixed directedness: the “I” of the [male] writer is superimposed upon the “I” of the [female] narrators [= actresses]. [Tazaki then concludes somewhat hastily]. The author’s love of the actresses is thus actualized by his “identification” with the actresses. His repeated emphasis on his guests’ refusal of dating him does not mean the failure of his project; on the contrary, it indicates the completion of his love stories. [*Music Magazine*, July, ‘96 (24)]

Tazaki’s analysis focuses on the critical moment of a mutual intervention and transfer, which enables the “integration of the self” of the interviewees by way of creating the confession narrative. Hara seems to explain, through his own experience, the same crucial moment in the genesis of self-expression:

If I shoot scenes of sex [by using some of the interviewees in the book], I want to indicate the wholeness of the models’ lives through them. What I would want is neither to make an AV nor to document their life scenes, exclusively apart from their sex lives. What ultimately interests me is to participate in a dramatic moment in which a model’s body expresses, thanks to the intervention of a camera, something that has never given form to by her own consciousness—a moment when her new life story is born. [*Shūkan Post*, May 24, ‘96 (9)]

We can easily detect in this intervention of a catalyst an elaborated form of the “*jouissance sexuelle*.”

SHARING ENCOURAGEMENT

Despite the author’s self-deprecatory emphasis on his “unattractive middle-aged man look,” Nagasawa’s book displays a popularity that goes beyond the limited appreciation usually evinced by the typical “document for folklore studies” at the end of the twentieth Century in Japan. A young columnist, Niieda Kaoru is an example. She expresses her appreciation of the book with a casual tone of voice: “At first, I got the impression that the interviewer wasn’t tough enough to ask more in-depth questions. But soon I realized that I was not quite right. The author didn’t set out to make a documentary, but, instead, tried to write ‘encouraging stories’ (the book’s postscript) based on these interviews” [*Geinō Box*, July,

'96 (23)]. Among the reviewers, Asayama Minoru is empathetically sensitive to this supposed intention of the author. "After reading this book, you will find in yourself such affection for each of the girls that you will be in love with them all" [*Shūkan Asahi*, June 21, '96].

We can recall here the attempted suicide committed by a famous AV actress of the late 80s, Kuroki Kaori, shortly after the publication of a book about her, based on interviews made by a female journalist, who asked harshly detailed questions in violation of the actress' privacy. In the commentary at the end of *AV Joyū*, Ōtsuki Takahiro mentions that Nagasawa hates the bullying approach that some journalists adopt when they interview AV actresses, who are often mentally fragile (p. 561). Nakamura Kimie also reports that in a conversation with her, Nagasawa mentioned that "one should not write a single phrase which would hurt the interviewed person" [*Shūkan Economist*, Jan. 14, '97 (62)]. His encouraging approach to the actresses creates effects beyond his expectations. He realizes "how many times it was I who was encouraged by these girls! They helped me build my own self-confidence" [*Weekly Asahi Geinō*, Aug. 15, '96 (34)] In another interview, he emphatically refers to the interview with Nanjō Rei as an "unforgettable" experience.

After graduating from high school, Nanjō Rei goes to Canada. Although she becomes a homeless for complicated reasons, she finally finds a job as waitress in a restaurant. When she finishes working, she brings back the remaining scraps of meals to her homeless friends who gather at a church. She shouts when she comes close to them: "Hi everybody, we can enjoy a special meal this evening!" This heart-warming story is my favorite. [*Shūkan Asahi Geinō*, Aug. 15, '96 (34), a magazine known as a vulgar tabloid weekly; for a more detailed story, refer to *A.V.A.* p. 334]

The reader of the book will notice that this girl, surnamed Nanjō Rei, seems to be famous for her extremely rude performances, ranging from sadomasochism, to anal sex, to scatology, including scenes involving rectal injection and urination. Still, this supplementary information (redundant to her fans) would not necessarily destroy the almost "sacred" image created for her in the book. On the contrary, the danger lies in the fact that this image contributes to reinforce the mythology of the sacred abjection. In fact, some editors/reviewers intentionally integrate Nagasawa's message within that myth, according to which a sacred and im-

maculate woman is forced to fall into disgrace and dishonor by the will of a merciless (and, ironically, merciful) authority.

Incidentally, "The Wounded Angels" is the title of one of the articles in which Nagasawa is interviewed about his book [*Da Vinci*, Jan., '97 (53)]. According to the *Weekly Asahi Geinō*, Nagasawa finds in Ozawa Natsumi [from whom we have quoted at the beginning of this paper] an image of "*Notre Dame de la miséricorde*" [*Shūkan Asahi Geinō*, Aug. 15, '96 (34): I am suspicious as to whether or not Nagasawa actually made this reference]. Yūki Shūji, who viewed Natsumi's video after reading the book, does not hesitate to believe in her "almost religious spirituality," which leads her in such a way as to devote herself to fully satisfy male sexual pleasure [*WinComer*, Aug. '96 (29)]. These illustrations are almost caricatures of what Ōgoshi Aiko once called the "*Kannon complex of Japanese Male sexuality*" [*Feminisumu Nyūmon* (Introduction to Feminism), p. 201], in which this Buddhistic divinity is understood as an incarnation of something similar to the Catholic "mercy," which functions to forgive, salvage, and satisfy every human desire. Thus, the Japanese male tends to insist on, according to Inaba Mayumi's wording, the "perverse illusion of a fabricated Goddess of Sex" [*Shinchō* 45, Dec., '96 (49)].

Note that Nagasawa's book itself remains free from the temptation of the "*Kannon complex.*" Nagasawa feels simply happy to have been able to record Nanjō Rei's heart-warming story and wishes the story be heard by a wider range of people. "For those young people who are in despair and self-abandonment, I would like to recommend these stories, knowing that it is presumptuous of me to do so, [as the author]. Unfortunately, the book is not cheap enough, but I am sure that you can get, from these life stories, a renewed courage to confront difficulties in your lives" [*Tokyo Shinbun; Chūnichī Shinbun*, Jul.14, '96 (31)]. As if to respond to this message, Ono Kōsei, composer, musician and essayist, confesses that "this book really encouraged me" [*Shūkan Gendai*, Jan. 4–11, '97 (60)]. Although contagion and infection are generally not welcome, the chain effect of healing is expected as an important effect of this book, which seems to be developed beyond any possible ideological accusations or resistance.

IN THE GUISE OF A CONCLUSION, THREE ANECDOTES MIGHT BE HELPFUL

Obtaining agreements for publication from the interviewees was a tremendous problem. Most of the actresses were long-retired, and it was not easy to trace their tracks. Some production companies refused to give

permission, and some actresses had since been married (incidentally, some of the pin-up faces are covered by mosaic in order to prevent identification). It was the editor, Mukai Tōru, who cleared these difficult legal obstacles. At first, the author and editor worried about the possibility of being sued by some of the interviewees included in the book. But, so far, no such case has been reported, and the author says he is most happy to receive telephone calls and letters of gratitude coming from those ex-actresses, who remember well this “Teddy-Bear-like gentle uncle” and thankfully welcome the re-publication of their own stories [*Shūkan Bunshun*, Aug. 1, '96 (33); *WinComer*, Aug., '96 (29); *Da Vinci*, Jan., '97 (53)].

Of course the publication has its own “*part maudit*” (Georges Bataille) or accursed shadow. Among forty-two (ex-)actresses, only one actress does not use a stage name, and only one other reveals her real name. The rest of the actresses’ identities are inexorably linked to their fictional code-names, and obscured by biographies fabricated for commercial use. Several of the details recorded in the interviews also had to be censored for legal and other reasons. “One actress, whose interview is excluded from the book, confesses that she experienced orgies, lesbianism, marijuana, and cocaine when she was a fifth-grader; she further related that when her boyfriend killed himself when she was an eighth-grader, she and a group of her friends then burned his body and disposed of it in the sea. I [Nagasawa] rushed to contact the publisher’s editorial department to check when the statue of limitation of the desecration of a human body would expire” [*Jitsuwa Press*, Sep. 13, '96 (37)]. Even if the story was fabricated by her, the fact that she was in need of such a deceptive story must be regarded as a sign of the kind of challenge she had to issue to the surrounding world. In this condition, “certainly, some calculation on the part of the interviewees must also be taken into account” [*Daily Gendai*, June 6, '96 (16)]. It is also difficult to utilize the case studies of forty-two girls in order to understand the general vision of those who work in the same profession.

Rather than relying on such sociological temptations as statistics or stereotyping, the author places importance, instead, on each individual case’s irreplaceable personality. “While interviewing them, I had the feeling that spirits of *mizuko* (aborted babies and new-born babies immediately murdered) really hang on my shoulder. To give written expression to their life-stories was, therefore, a sort of ‘religious service to console these *mizuko*’s straying souls’ [*mizuko-kuyō*]. Since I had already heard these stories, I had no choice but to write them down for their consolation” [*Heaven*, Sep. 20, '96, (38)]. My own approach in this paper has

been a somewhat awkward imitation of Nagasawa's method—that is, to quote other persons' words in their own way, so as to “narratologically transfer” the impact intrinsic to the act of listening in direct exposure to the heterogeneous words of the speakers. Note that this approach becomes necessarily challenging when working within North American academic conventions.

To conclude, let me quote the wish of one of the reviewers to read Nagasawa's renewed interviews of the same actresses included in the current book. The healing process by way of confession has just begun in the narrow margin which remains in the double-bind between the coming-out and protection of privacy (by mosaic photo portraits): “What kind of lives can these ex-AV actresses find in ten or twenty years? And what kind of women will they become by then? I wish I could read their future stories, interviewed by the same author, Nagasawa Mitsuo” [*Shūkan Yomiuri*, Sep. 8, '96 (39)].

APPENDIX:
LIST OF BOOK REVIEWS OF NAGASAWA MITSUO'S
ADULT VIDEO ACTRESSES

[Reference No., Title, Legal Publishing Date, Issue Date, Publisher, Page]

Anno 1996

1. *Takarajima*, May 15, issued on May 1, Takarajima-sha, p. 99
2. *Asahi Shinbun*, May 5, issued on May 5, Asahi Shinbunsha, p. 11
3. *Weekly Nighter Sports*, May 27, issued on May 16, Naitai, p. 7
4. *Nippon Keizai Shibun*, May 19, issued on May 19, Nippon Keizai Shinbunsha
5. *Weekly Play Boy*, June 6, issued on May 19, Shūeisha, p. 161
6. *Sankei Shinbun*, May 20, issued on May 20, Sangō Keizai Shibunsha
7. *Surikomi-han Gekijō*, June 13, issued on May 23, Bunka-sha
8. *Hanako*, May 30, issued on May 23, Shōgakkan, p. 67
9. *Shūkan Post*, June 7, issued on May 24, Shōgakkan, pp. 144–45
10. *Yomiuri Shinbun*, May 26, issued on May 26, Yomiuri-Shinbunsha, p. 10
11. *Asahi Shinbun* (evening), May 27, issued may 27, Asahi Shibunsha
12. *Tokyo Walker*, June 4, issued on May 28, Kadokawa Shoten
13. *Brutus*, June 15, issued on June 1, Magazine House, p. 62
14. *Studio Voice*, July, issued on June 1, Magazine House, p. 68
15. *Asahi Shinbun*, June 2, issued on June 2, Asahi Shibunsha, p. 11
16. *Nikkan Gendai*, June 2, issued on June 6, Nikkan Gendai, p. 13
17. *Jiyū Jikan*, June 20, issued on June 6, Magazine House, p. 51
18. *Shūkan Asahi*, June 21, issued on June 7, Asahi Shibunsha, p. 123
19. *Uwasa no Shinsū*, July, issued on June 10, Uwasa no Shinsō, p. 128
20. *Asahi Shinbun*, June 16, issued on June 16, Asahi Shinbunsha, p. 15
21. *Hato yo!* July, issued on June 17, Magazine House, p. 111
22. *Music Magazine*, July, issued on June 20, Music Magazine, pp. 146–47
23. *Geinō Box*, July, issued on June 17, Tatsumi Shuppan, p. 181
24. *T.V. Bros*, June 22, issued on June 19, Tokyo News Ts shinsha
25. *Kaminoge Shinbun*, June 24, issued on June 24, Kaminoge Shinbunsha, p. 26
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