

The Fukushima Fiction Film: Gender and the Discourse of Nuclear Containment

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Abstract

This article examines the systems for designating and containing both the contamination from the March 2011 Fukushima nuclear power plant (NPP) accident and the fear of radiation. This discourse of containment appears in the cinematic images of two fiction films: *Land of Hope* (Kibō no kuni, 2012) and *The Tranquil Everyday* (Odayaka na nichijō, 2012). I look at the films' portrayals of the female characters who struggle to confirm and assess radiological danger in so-called "safe" zones. When they voice their fears and challenge the illusion of safety, they themselves are contained and made invisible by the diagnoses of radiophobia, hysteria, and paralyzing fatalism.

Keywords: Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, 3/11 fiction film, gender, radiological danger, radiophobia, containment

In the aftermath of the nuclear meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) in spring 2011, the Japanese government and plant owner Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) sought to contain the disaster and to allay the fears of citizens. These measures of containment took tangible, visible form as words, actions, images, and physical objects: the various designations for the evacuation areas, no entry signs, fences, barriers, protective gear, masks, and government assurances of "no immediate health risks" (*tadachi ni eikyō wa nai*).¹ Yet the danger itself—radiation spewing from the plant—remained invisible. Hence these signifiers had to overcompensate for our

inability to perceive the nuclear threat by attempting to mark the boundaries of the invisible. In doing so, they sought to grant a sense of security that turned out to be as false as the myth of safety surrounding Japan's nuclear program itself.

This article examines these systems of nuclear signification, specifically this discourse of containment, as it appears in two works of post-disaster Japanese cinema: Sono Sion's *Land of Hope* (Kibō no kuni, 2012) and Uchida Nobuteru's *The Tranquil Everyday* (Odayaka na nichijō, 2012).² The systems of nuclear signification are at work in both of these fiction films as characters attempt to assess the level of danger even though they are outside the official designated no-go zones. *Land of Hope* is set in an area designated as an evacuation zone where danger is identified, and by extension, safety ostensibly reassured. However, when the characters leave the disaster area, the boundaries become much harder to identify, with some markers disappearing altogether. Two of the characters in *Land of Hope* leave the disaster area, and *The Tranquil Everyday* takes place entirely outside of the affected zones. In these so-called "safe landscapes," the majority of characters in the films unquestioningly accept the government assurances of safety. However, those few who do ask questions—primarily female characters—are left to make their own judgments about the dangers of radiation, which neither visibly mark the landscape nor are visibly marked by the signage and warnings of the disaster zone.

Uchida Nobuteru, the director of *The Tranquil*

Everyday stated his desire to focus on women after seeing their fear and the reactions to them on the internet.³ His producer, Sugino Kiki, who also plays Saeko in the film, concurred saying: “after the disaster, the voices of women, who are deeply aware of the disaster’s impact on daily life, were hardly heard in society at all.”⁴ Uchida’s film focuses almost exclusively on women, and Sono also emphasizes the plight of the daughter-in-law in *Land of Hope*. When the women in these films challenge this system of safety by voicing fear and doubt, they are marked, and the threat they represent is defused when they are inscribed within the language of nuclear containment. The women’s actions set them apart from their communities, and they are further distanced by another set of signifiers—radiophobia, hysteria, and paralyzing fatalism—medical and psychological discourses used to contain dissent and deny responsibility in the post-nuclear accident climates of Hanford, Chernobyl, and Fukushima.

Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt argues in “Gendering ‘Fukushima’: Resistance, Self-Responsibility, and Female Hysteria in Sono Sion’s *Land of Hope*” that while the gender stereotypes in Sono’s film make “his anti-nuclear criticism more socially acceptable,” he reinforces the social limits on anti-nuclear protest that has been marked as female, and undercuts the credibility of his characters and his message about the need to rethink the nation’s support for nuclear power.⁵ Iwata-Weickgenannt is interested in how the gender bias in *Land of Hope* subverts the film’s ability to function as an anti-nuclear critique.⁶ In this article, I further Iwata-Weickgenannt’s arguments about the gendered response to the Fukushima disaster by considering how danger is marked both inside and outside the disaster zone, and how the public marking of radiation in non-disaster zones is itself a dangerous act that must be contained lest it compromise the shared public desire for a belief in safety. While

the signifiers within the disaster zone work to make the nuclear threat visible, signifiers outside the zone render invisible anyone who questions this myth of safety.

Although there are male characters in these films, some of whom are also ostracized, the focus is on women and children. By limiting the subject in this way, these films dramatize the shift in Japanese society that turned the nuclear situation into a domestic drama.⁷ The government and TEPCO refused to take responsibility for this national problem, turning it into a dilemma for private individuals to solve through personal decisions about whether to evacuate, where to live, what to eat, etc. Hideaki Fujiki critiques this very logic of choice that was forced on residents in post-disaster Japan where the government has implemented “a decontamination program that nudges the residents to choose to remain in the 1-20mSv areas rather than leave.”⁸ This privatization of risk shifts responsibility for the disaster away from the government to individual residents.⁹ In these two films, the private choices regarding the presence of radiological danger become problematic when they mark a shared public space that is assumed to be safe.

Before turning to a summary of the films, I comment on their place within the body of post-disaster cinema in Japan. The vast majority of films about 3/11 are documentary, including a large number of amateur works as well as those made by established filmmakers, such as Funahashi Atsushi, Kamanaka Hitomi, Fujiwara Toshi, Mori Tatsuya, and Ian Thomas Ash.¹⁰ Fictional 3/11 films have been criticized by filmmakers such as Funahashi for misrepresenting the truth of the situation, and have courted controversy for their use of panoramic footage from the disaster area that has been deemed disrespectful.¹¹ A full exploration of both the reason for the small number of fictional 3/11 films and the above criticism is beyond the scope of this paper, but the answer may also be a question of

economics and viewer expectations. As early as 2012 it was said that “novels dealing with the disaster do not sell, movies do not draw audiences, and TV shows have low ratings.”

¹² Sono’s film was primarily funded with money from the UK, Taiwan, and Germany, and Uchida talked about the difficulty of finding funding in Japan.¹³ Do the economics of mainstream cinema preclude fiction films about the disaster, or are Japanese viewers uninterested in film as social critique, as Sono himself suggested?¹⁴ Additionally, documentary filmmakers have exercised a level of ethical restraint that has kept them from depicting problems in the disaster area due to the demand for respect for their subjects that the medium imposes.¹⁵ This ethical restraint in documentary cinema may hinder representations in fiction films as well.

I am interested in the fictional 3/11 film specifically because the limited representation of the disaster in non-documentary cinema has not been reproduced in other fiction-based media, such as literature and manga, which have flourished in the wake of the disaster. My focus with these films is on those characters who live outside the disaster zone, and perhaps it is the representation of less easily identifiable victims in so-called “non-disaster” areas, or the discord within post-disaster communities that presents a challenge for cinema. I argue, however, that these films successfully depict a post-nuclear disaster environment in which the characters struggle to assess danger in the face of challenges such as the invisibility of radiation, the unknowability of that danger, and the desire of their communities to believe in government assurances of safety. Below is a brief summary of the films.

Land of Hope starts with an earthquake that triggers an explosion at the local NPP. Mr. Ono, a cattle farmer, has part of his property cordoned off by the authorities who are setting up a 20km evacuation zone around the affected

plant. Ono’s neighbors are evacuated to shelters, but some of his property lies just outside the perimeter. Ono orders his son Yoichi to leave the area and take his wife Izumi with him, since she is of childbearing age and should not stay in the irradiated environment. The film follows both Yoichi and Izumi as they struggle to relocate, and their former neighbors the Matsuzaki family, who are adjusting to life in the shelters. When Izumi finds out she is pregnant, she sees danger all around. Yoichi is harassed at work for the actions his wife takes to protect herself. Meanwhile, Mr. Ono is pressured by the authorities to leave his home, since he and his wife are the only residents left in the area. The film ends with Mr. Ono killing his cattle, himself, and his wife. Yoichi and Izumi escape to a seemingly safe area only to find out that it is irradiated as well. This final scene makes the title of the film deeply ironic.

The Tranquil Everyday also begins with an earthquake and nuclear accident as it follows the lives of two women. Yukako and her husband Tatsuya live next door to Saeko, the mother of a young girl, Kiyomi. The two women struggle to understand the deluge of information about the nuclear disaster and to keep their families safe. Saeko’s efforts to ensure her daughter’s safety at school are blocked by a group of mothers who ridicule her and deny her fears about radiation. Hounded by hate mail and crank phone calls, abandoned by her husband, and unable to keep her daughter safe, she is driven to an attempted double suicide when her daughter gets a nosebleed. Yukako smells the natural gas that Saeko left running in her apartment, courageously saves them, and then supports Saeko’s efforts to regain custody of her daughter. Yukako reconciles with her husband, who realizes her fears are real, and the story ends with him proposing they try again to have a baby. The final scene is of them packing up their apartment to move to an undisclosed location.

Depicting the nuclear environment

As visual media, these films signal the presence of an irradiated environment by means of visible markers: fences and cordoned zones, no entry signs, protective gear, masks, and numerical readings on beeping Geiger counters. In *Land of Hope* the nuclear environment is represented as a space that is physically blocked off and separated. The residents encounter innumerable “no entry” signs (*tachiiri kinshi*) and police blockades (image 1).



Image 1

In one scene, the Ono family watches as the authorities construct a fence across their land, and a later scene shows the town bisected by these fences (image 2), a shot that references the real-world consequences for towns like Namie that were divided by the designation of no-go zones.¹⁶



Image 2

At times the characters try to break through these barriers, sometimes successfully, like the Matsuzaki's son who is trying to help his girlfriend return to the area of her parental home, or the Onos, who cross the barrier to care for their neighbor's dog. In another scene, Mrs. Ono, who suffers from a form of dementia, wanders through the town while her husband frantically searches for her. Although these characters enter the zone with no protection against the radiation, there is also no explicitly voiced fear of it. The film seems to be asking: if the Ono's have no need for protective gear in their home or on their land, why would they need it only feet away on the other side of the no-go zone? It is not only the Onos, but the town officials trying in vain to convince the Onos to evacuate, who are seen traveling around the area in regular clothing, not even wearing masks.

Although it is questionable how much protection masks can provide from radiological danger, the non-wearing of them in these scenes works as a performance of safety that is puzzling. Mr. Ono is deeply skeptical of the government's assurances that life is safe on his side of the barrier, yet he does not take any measures to protect himself and his wife from the radiation. Although he does send his son and daughter-in-law away, Mr. Ono chooses to remain and die on his ancestral land. Cinematically these scenes of characters roaming the no-go zone without protection send mixed messages: is it dangerous or not?

The only scenes in which characters in or near the no-go zone wear protective gear are those of the authorities who construct the fence across the Ono's land and evacuate their neighbors (image 1). Besides this, the film does not indicate that the characters in or near the zone are in any danger of being irradiated, in effect treating these visible barriers, and by extension the evacuation zones they mark, as meaningless. Although the messaging in some of these scenes is unclear, ultimately the film shows how the construction of barriers and zones serves only as false reassurance, and does not provide any real protection from radiation that in reality cannot be contained.

The questioning of these barriers and their designated zones references real world criticism of the Japanese government's evacuation orders. The Japanese government instituted a system of concentric circles as a means of demarcating areas for evacuating residents based on their distance from the plant, rather than use the knowledge from Chernobyl and US nuclear testing that showed the "uneven and patchy" nature of radiation fallout.¹⁷ The government decision to delay until March 23 (12 days after the disaster) the release of the SPEEDI (System for Prediction of Environmental Emergency Dose Information) data that would have taken into account wind and weather patterns is one example of the failure of the concentric circle model of evacuation to accurately reflect the dangers on the ground. Some residents fleeing the radiation unknowingly moved into zones of higher contamination, a situation that could have been avoided or ameliorated by the release of this data and by extending the unsafe zones accordingly.¹⁸ Additionally, the government decided to raise the annual exposure dosage that is considered safe, subjecting citizens to 20 times the normal risk for those within the designated zones. Those outside these official areas were not given support to evacuate, despite the fact that many were in areas of higher radiation according to

SPEEDI data.¹⁹

In contrast to the situation in the evacuation zones, both fiction films emphasize the fear of radiation on the part of characters who reside in areas that are supposedly safe. These safe areas are unmarked because they are outside the official zones, and hence the danger is harder to identify. The spread of radiation beyond the visible markers/boundaries of the no-go zones is a source of anxiety for the characters in *Land of Hope* and *The Tranquil Everyday*. I focus on the women in these films who distrust reassurances that the radiation will not spread, and who question the government's ability to protect them. In the face of an invisible threat, they rely on information found on the internet and on their own readings of radiation levels around them to confirm their fears. When these women take action to protect themselves, as described below, they create their own markers of safety and danger in an unmarked landscape, and are harassed and ostracized for doing so. When the women's decisions about their private lives mark the shared, public space as unsafe, the community perceives them as a threat.

In *Land of Hope*, Izumi's fears peak after talking to a young mother at the hospital who tells Izumi the doctors found cesium in her breastmilk even though she is not from the disaster area and has been very careful (image 3). In one scene, Izumi imagines the world outside as filled with red gas—as the invisible dangers of radiation are made visible and given names like cesium (image 4).



Images 3 and 4

She runs home, gets out her Geiger counter, and tapes her windows shut. Unclear of where the boundaries are, Izumi attempts to create her own “safe zone,” blocking out the dangers of the world around her by isolating herself; she seals off her apartment and wears protective gear, regardless of whether she is indoors or outside. The film includes scenes of her walking down the city streets and shopping in the supermarket dressed in full protective gear, as the residents stare in amazement and resentment (image 5).



Image 5

Not only is Izumi’s response seen as extreme; her husband Yoichi is harassed by his coworkers who see Izumi’s actions as an insult to the town. When Izumi first tapes up their apartment she tells Yoichi that moving there was meaningless because they are still exposed to the dangers of radiation. When he counters that the government says it is OK, she yells that they are fighting an “invisible war.” Her comment functions as a self-conscious reference in the film to the very lack of visibility of nuclear threats.

The nuclear crisis plays out in Sono Sion’s campy, over-the-top style. But the naturalistic, albeit melodramatic, *Tranquil Everyday* portrays an even more extreme response to the radioactive environment. This film is set exclusively in areas that should be safe since they are outside of the official evacuation zones, but the dangers of contamination are seemingly ever present. In *The Tranquil Everyday*, Yukako and Saeko experience the disaster simultaneously, and the film cuts back and forth between the two to show their parallel experience. Both women watch their TVs in horror, research radiation on the computer, and try to convince their families to take safety measures by wearing a mask. The women live next door to each other, and Uchida sets their lives on a collision course.

Yukako, who is childless and works at home does not feel the social pressure on Saeko, who

has to make choices about sending her daughter to school and allowing her to play outside, as she deals with the effects of state and institutional policies on perceptions of radiation and daily life. Saeko's public choices to protect her daughter—making her wear a mask and bring her own lunch to school—are met with resistance and rejection by the community of other mothers at the school (image 6).



Image 6

Saeko's (and to some extent Yukako's) predicament is reminiscent of the Chernobyl survivors Adriana Petryna describes who are trapped by large scale scientific studies in two "undesirable and potentially hazardous moral-conceptual states. . . The first is denial or amnesia ('nothing happened here'). The second is a state of constant exposure to unpredictable unknowns."²⁰ Surrounded by mothers who seek to maintain their belief in the visible markers that indicate their safe remove from the radiation, Saeko is confronted by the narrative of "nothing happened here."²¹ This narrative combines with the lack of official markers of danger to allow the mothers and school officials to maintain a status quo ignorant of the radiological dangers.²² Yet, armed with some knowledge from the internet and a Geiger counter, Saeko and Yukako know that they are in "a state of constant exposure to unpredictable unknowns." In one scene,

Yukako panics and runs into the school yard passing out masks and talking about the effects of radiation on children after the Chernobyl accident. She is taken away by the police—her protest criminalized and silenced. Saeko, powerless to change the world around her and hounded by community pressure to conform, takes extreme action when her daughter gets a nosebleed. The nosebleed is the only visible, physical effect of radiation seen in either film. It has been a controversial visible marker of radiation exposure in post-Fukushima Japan, as seen in the uproar over Kariya Tetsu's inclusion of a nosebleed scene in the popular manga series *Oishinbo*.²³ The scene comes after his protagonist visits the ailing NPP, and both locals and government officials criticized Kariya for spreading "harmful rumors" about radiation levels in the disaster area.²⁴

In an act far more extreme than Izumi's donning of protective gear, Saeko turns on the natural gas inside her apartment and tries to kill herself and her daughter. This attempted double suicide by an invisible gas—a poison produced by a utility company—works as a symbolic death by radiation. Saeko and her daughter both live, thanks to her neighbor Yukako's intervention. But Saeko, a single parent, loses custody of her daughter, and it is hard to imagine that she will return to a normal life with Kiyomi. Life as she knew it is over. She pays a very high price for having publicly voiced her fears.

Gender and radiophobia

Both films turn into domestic dramas of women becoming unhinged by their fears of radiation, fears that other characters in the film do not share (at least openly), because the systems of nuclear signification indicate that no danger is present. Living outside the evacuation zones, the decision to protect oneself becomes entirely personal and beyond the scope of either government or TEPCO responsibility. Yet,

because the resistance offered by Izumi, Saeko, and Yukako threatens the normative discourse of safety, they must be contained by another set of barriers, namely a series of diagnoses. In *Land of Hope*, Izumi's ob-gyn tells Yoichi that she suffers from *hōshanō kyōfushō* (radiophobia) and that it could negatively impact her pregnancy. In *The Tranquil Everyday*, Saeko gets hate mail which labels her as a radiophobic, neurotic nuisance (*hōshanō noirōzē meiwaku*), not as someone with valuable information to share or whose voice in the public debate should be countenanced (image 7). When Yukako is taken away by the police, one of the mothers calls her "strange" (*okashii*), a comment on her non-normative, "disturbed" behavior.

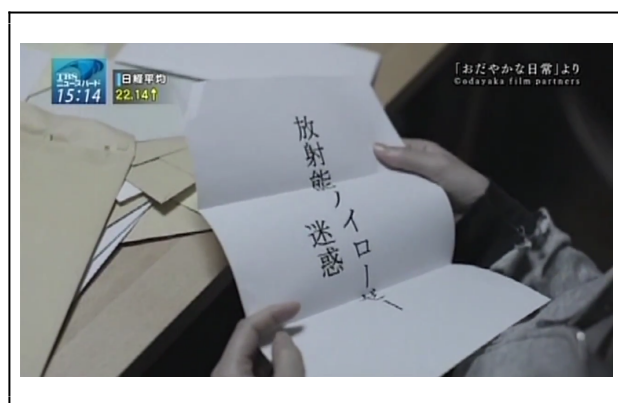


Image 7

Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt makes the connection between Izumi's diagnosis of "radiophobia" and the post-Fukushima bashing of "anti-nuclear activists as 'hysterical.'"²⁵ But these associations have a history that is not limited to the Fukushima accident. The term "radiophobia" was coined by Ukrainian health minister Anatolii Romanenko "to describe unwarranted fear and panic among populations" due to "chronic informational stress," and the diagnosis was assigned to radiation victims after Chernobyl as a means to avoid taking "public responsibility" for the illnesses caused by the NPP disaster.²⁶ Even before this syndrome was officially named, those living downwind of American nuclear

testing, especially women, were told by Public Health Service officials "that their 'neurosis' about the fallout was the only thing that would give them cancer, particularly if they were female." Manifestations of radiation sickness were attributed to such neuroses and labeled "housewife syndrome."²⁷

Saeko's attempted double suicide can also be attributed to a "paralyzing fatalism." Petryna references this term in relation to the WHO 2005 Chernobyl report that argued that "persistent myths and misconceptions about the threat of radiation have resulted in 'paralyzing fatalism'" "among those living in affected areas."²⁸ Petryna objects to these "moral claims" about the survivors, and argues instead that they have been "overlooked by science."²⁹ However, in *The Tranquil Everyday* there is no such counter argument to defend Saeko's actions. She is portrayed as a victim of this "paralyzing fatalism" that drives her to attempt a double suicide with her young daughter (image 8).

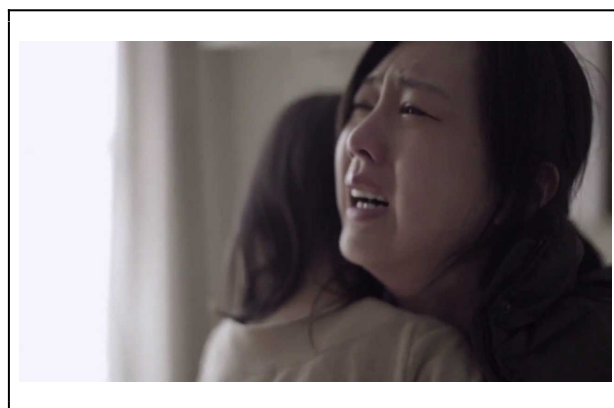


Image 8

Sharon Stephens reminds us that this gender bias runs throughout the nuclear industry: the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) has never had a woman on their commission, and the public has been long portrayed in terms of the stereotypical feminine characteristics of irrational, uneducated, emotional, and at times hysterical behavior.³⁰

Beyond this medicalization, Saeko is further contained or discounted by the social pressure that forces conformity, a dynamic that has been documented in the disaster area. Research by Slater, Morioka, and Danzuka reveals the ways that the “micro-politics” of the family can put pressure on Fukushima mothers, especially those in farming communities, to remain with their children in the contaminated areas as part of their duties to their husbands, mothers-in-law, and extended families.³¹ The fears of radiation expressed by these mothers are labeled “damaging rumors” (*fūhyō higai*), discrediting both the words of dissent and the speaker.³² The label of “rumor” is one means of blocking the “leakage of doubt and fear” in the contaminated area.³³ Slater, Morioka, and Danzuka also discuss the ways that women who express their fears of radiation are pathologized as having an “unstable and unreasonable nervous personality type.”³⁴ These women’s concerns were dismissed as “irrational fears” and they were labeled as “crazy” (*atama ga okashikunatta*).³⁵ When Saeko has her confrontation with the mothers at the school, they accuse her of spreading “damaging rumors.” Just as the words and images of safety “contain” the radiation, these diagnoses and labels “contain” these women and defuse their threat.

The pressure on Saeko comes from the mothers at her daughter’s school, but even these mothers are shown as harboring their own fears about radiation. One of the mothers who works at the supermarket talks to Yukako about another mother (Saeko) who was bullied at the daycare, expressing her own uncertainty about what to do. Yukako tells her to wear a mask but to tell others it is for a cold, advice she takes later in the film. Noriko, the most outspoken of the mothers, is married to an employee of the electric company and seems distressed after a hushed cell phone conversation with her husband. Noriko silences others but may be unable to express her own anxiety and perhaps

even dissent. The research of Slater et al. reveals this community silencing, and *The Tranquil Everyday* paints a muted, yet nuanced picture of women both applying pressure to conform and feeling that same pressure themselves.³⁶

Although both films depict the societal pressures on women, neither portrays women finding supportive communities in which they can express their concerns about radiation. In *The Tranquil Everyday*, Saeko would seem to have found support in Yukako, but the film ends with Yukako and her husband packing up to move away. Sugino Kiki commented that the film is not about who is right or wrong, but about allowing the expression of a range of opinions, something she feels is lacking in Japan.³⁷ In *The Tranquil Everyday* the women may have equal opportunity to voice their opinions, but they do not all suffer societal censure for having done so. Noriko’s group is not silenced or ostracized in the same way or to the same degree as Saeko, Yukako, or Izumi are. Some opinions are socially acceptable, while others are not. Documentary filmmaker Kamanaka Hitomi puts a different spin on the difficulties these women face in speaking out. She argues that Japanese women “are not trained to speak out” and “have not yet grown into their voices.”³⁸ The silencing of women in these films is not a function of the gender of the filmmakers. As mentioned earlier, Sugino had a large role in the making of *The Tranquil Everyday*, and there are instances of women speaking out in films like Ian Thomas Ash’s *A2-B-C*. If anything, the films portray the various societal pressures that shut down women or limit the topics on which are allowed to speak.³⁹ This runs parallel to the ways in which anti-nuclear protests in Japan are gendered female, but are also depoliticized due to the emphasis on so-called domestic concerns such as children’s safety.⁴⁰

Conclusion

Uchida Nobuteru, director of *The Tranquil Everyday*, talked about how he saw his film as expressing the desire to return to an everyday normalcy that had been stolen by the Fukushima accident.⁴¹ However, both films show the impossibility of such a return. If areas like those in *The Tranquil Everyday* are unsafe, how can areas around the plant and in the disaster zone possibly be safe? The films depict an irradiated environment that is all around and is not contained by the visible barriers of evacuation zones and no-entry signs, questioning the government's rhetoric of containment and the myth of safety surrounding nuclear power. Both argue for a wider circle of victimization and in doing so, cast doubt on the government's decision to move residents back into the former no-go zones.

Additionally, these fiction films depict a social environment where "the indeterminacy and unknowability of radiation effects is the rule." In this environment the female protagonists are confronted with the fabricated amnesia of "nothing happened here," all the while fearing

they are in a state of "constant exposure" to danger. None of the women have any viable options to protect themselves or their children (born or unborn). To use Petryna's words, they are forced into a "moral calculus of risk."⁴² As domestic dramas, these films depict the erasure of government culpability and the shifting of responsibility to individual citizens. Although *The Tranquil Everyday* nuances its scenes of public silencing, in failing to show any women who are anti-nuclear activists, members of support networks, or citizens whose contribution to public discourse is valued, both films depict, and do little to counter, existing stereotypes of women's roles in post-Fukushima accident Japan. Women like Saeko remain isolated and silenced.

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Notes

¹ Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary, Edano Yukio used this phrase on March 16 after explosions at reactors 1, 2, and 3 and a fire at number 4. He repeated this phrase on seven occasions. See Noriko Manabe, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Protest Music After Fukushima* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 49. Also see Manabe for a list of

officials who said the conditions were safe post-meltdown. Manabe, 125. Edano's "tadachi" (immediate) was nominated for buzzword of the year. Manabe, 139.

² See the trailers [here](#) and [here](#)

³ *Odayaka na nichijō* [Uchida Nobuteru, accessed October 6, 2017.

⁴ "Intabyū: *Odayaka na nichijō*," Eiga.com, December 20, 2012.

⁵ Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt, "Gendering 'Fukushima': Resistance, Self-Responsibility, and Female Hysteria in Sono Sion's *Land of Hope*," in *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster*, ed. Barbara Geilhorn and Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt (London ; New York : New York: Routledge, 2017), 114.

⁶ Iwata-Weickgenannt, 120.

⁷ In *Land of Hope*, the patriarch Mr. Ono is a major exception to this gendered response, but he remains in an area that is clearly marked in relation to the contaminated zone. This article focuses primarily on the problems women encounter well outside of the no-go zones. See Iwata-Weickgenannt for more on the male characters in *Land of Hope*.

⁸ Fujiki notes that the standard for a 'safe area' in post-3/11 Japan is one affected by less than 20mSv of radiation, but the ICRP advises such a high level as acceptable only in "exceptional cases." 1mSv is the normal standard. Hideaki Fujiki, "Problematizing Life: Documentary Films on the 3.11 Nuclear Catastrophe," in *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster*, ed. Barbara Geilhorn and Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt (London ; New York: Routledge, 2017), 92.

⁹ Fujiki, 92. For more on the 3/11 disaster and privatization of risk, see Majia Holmer Nadesan, *Fukushima and the Privatization of Risk* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

¹⁰ See for example Funahashi's *Futaba kara tōku hanarete = Nuclear Nation* (2012), Kamanaka's *Surviving Internal Exposure* (Naibu hibaku o ikinuku, 2012) and *Little Voices from Fukushima* (Chisaki koe no kannon - sentaku suru hitobito, 2015), Fujiwara's *No Man's Zone* (Mujin chitai, 2012), Mori's *311* (2013) and Ash's *A2-B-C* (2013).

¹¹ I am thankful to Ryan Cook for this information. Sono was criticized for using such footage. For more on Sono, see Iwata-Weickgenannt, "Gendering 'Fukushima': Resistance, Self-Responsibility, and Female Hysteria in Sono Sion's *Land of Hope*," 112.

¹² Genkaiken and Iida Ichishi, "Joron hajime ni," in *Higashinohon daishinsaigo bungakuron*, ed. Genkaiken (Tokyo: Nan'undō, 2017), 11.

¹³ *Odayaka na nichijō* [Uchida Nobuteru. For more on the distribution of these documentary films, see Fujiki, "Problematizing Life: Documentary Films on the 3.11 Nuclear Catastrophe."

¹⁴ For more on Sono's comments see Iwata-Weickgenannt, "Gendering 'Fukushima': Resistance, Self-Responsibility, and Female Hysteria in Sono Sion's *Land of Hope*," 110-12. She also suggests that the influence of the nuclear village has restricted the fictionalization of 3/11 in Japanese cinema.

¹⁵ Fujiki, "Problematizing Life: Documentary Films on the 3.11 Nuclear Catastrophe," 106.

¹⁶ Namie was divided into three evacuation zones. "[Fukushima's Namie Sees No-Go Zone Designation Lifted](#)," *The Japan Times Online*, April 1, 2013.

¹⁷ Sarah Phillips, "[Fukushima Is Not Chernobyl? Don't Be so Sure](#)," *Somatosphere: Science, Medicine, Anthropology* (blog), March 11, 2013. Philips questions why the Japanese government did not apply the knowledge from Chernobyl and US nuclear testing about the

“uneven and patchy” nature of radiation fallout in order to map the evacuation zones “according to the *actual* radiological data.” The concentric circle model is standard for nuclear evacuation zones.

¹⁸ The Japanese government released this data to the US military on March 14, nine days earlier. Phillips.

¹⁹ The Japanese government raised the acceptable level for annual individual radiation exposure from 1mSv pre-3/11 to 20mSv after the disaster. Phillips; Gabrielle Hecht, “[Nuclear Janitors: Contract Workers at the Fukushima Reactors and Beyond](#),” *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 11, no. 1.2 (January 14, 2013); Vincenzo Capodici and Shaun Burnie, “[Reassessing the 3.11 Disaster and the Future of Nuclear Power in Japan: An Interview with Former Prime Minister Kan Naoto](#),” trans. Richard Minear, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 14, no. 18.1 (September 15, 2016); Adriana Petryna, *Life Exposed: Biological Citizens after Chernobyl* (Princeton University Press, 2002), xxiii.

²⁰ Petryna, *Life Exposed*, xxvii.

²¹ Petryna, xix.

²² Yukako’s husband Tatsuya is also silenced by his boss who uses similar arguments to dismiss Tatsuya’s request for a job transfer to Kansai, saying the government has assured us the radiation will do no harm.

²³ Lorie Brau, “*Oishinbo’s Fukushima Elegy: Grasping for the Truth About Radioactivity in Food Manga*,” in *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster*, ed. Barbara Geilhorn and Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt (London; New York: Routledge, 2017), 177–98; Eiichiro Ochiai, “[The Manga ‘Oishinbo’ Controversy: Radiation and Nose Bleeding in the Wake of 3.11](#),” *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 11, no. 25.4 (June 23, 2014).

²⁴ Filmmaker Funahashi Atsushi spoke in Kariya’s defense. See Funahashi Atsushi, “[‘Oishinbo’ no hanaji mondai: teki o miayamatte wa ikenai](#),” Hafinton posuto, May 12, 2014.

²⁵ Iwata-Weickgenannt, “Gendering ‘Fukushima’: Resistance, Self-Responsibility, and Female Hysteria in Sono Sion’s *Land of Hope*,” 122–23.

²⁶ Petryna, *Life Exposed*, 160, 177. See Petryna’s quote from forensic psychiatrist Oleksandr Tolkach about the implementation of this new term and its use in solving “all emerging social problems” (177).

²⁷ Carole Gallagher, *American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1993), xxx. I am grateful to Norma Field for this reference.

²⁸ Petryna, *Life Exposed*, xv; For more on the application of this diagnosis to the Fukushima accident, see George Johnson, “When Radiation Isn’t the Real Risk,” *New York Times*, September 21, 2015, sec. Science. Johnson quotes a medical physicist who argues: “It was the fear of radiation that ended up killing people.”

²⁹ Petryna, *Life Exposed*, xv.

³⁰ Sharon Stephens, “Bounding Uncertainty: The Post-Chernobyl Culture of Radiation Protection Experts,” in *Catastrophe & Culture: The Anthropology of Disaster*, ed. Susannah M. Hoffman and Anthony Oliver-Smith (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 2002), 110. The nuclear industry has a bias against women, but according to the Gender and Radiation Impact Project, “the harm to girls and women is, overall, roughly twice that of boys and men.” “[Gender and Radiation Impact Project](#),” accessed December 12, 2017. I am grateful to Norma Field for this reference.

³¹ David H. Slater, Rika Morioka, and Haruka Danzuka, “[MICRO-POLITICS OF RADIATION: Young Mothers Looking for a Voice in Post-3.11 Fukushima](#),” *Critical Asian Studies* 46, no. 3 (July 3, 2014): 494–95.

³² This is the same term that was used in the *Oishinbo* controversy.

³³ Slater, Morioka, and Danzuka, “MICRO-POLITICS OF RADIATION,” 497–98.

³⁴ Slater, Morioka, and Danzuka, 503.

³⁵ Slater, Morioka, and Danzuka, 505.

³⁶ As mentioned above, Yukako’s husband Tatsuya is also silenced.

³⁷ “Intabyū: *Odayaka na nichijō*.”

³⁸ Anastasia Smith, “[KJ 81 Online Special: Filmmaker and Activist Kamanaka Hitomi](#),” *Kyoto Journal* (blog), accessed December 4, 2017. I am grateful to Norma Field for this reference.

³⁹ Women activists were allowed to distribute pamphlets about the dangers of radiation as long as they did not include the words “nuclear energy.” For more see Slater, Morioka, and Danzuka, “MICRO-POLITICS OF RADIATION,” 502–3.

⁴⁰ For more on the social limitations on female anti-nuclear protest in Japan see Iwata-Weickgenannt, “Gendering ‘Fukushima’: Resistance, Self-Responsibility, and Female Hysteria in Sono Sion’s *Land of Hope*,” 114–16.

⁴¹ *Odayaka na nichijō* Uchida Nobuteru.

⁴² Petryna, *Life Exposed*, xxiv.