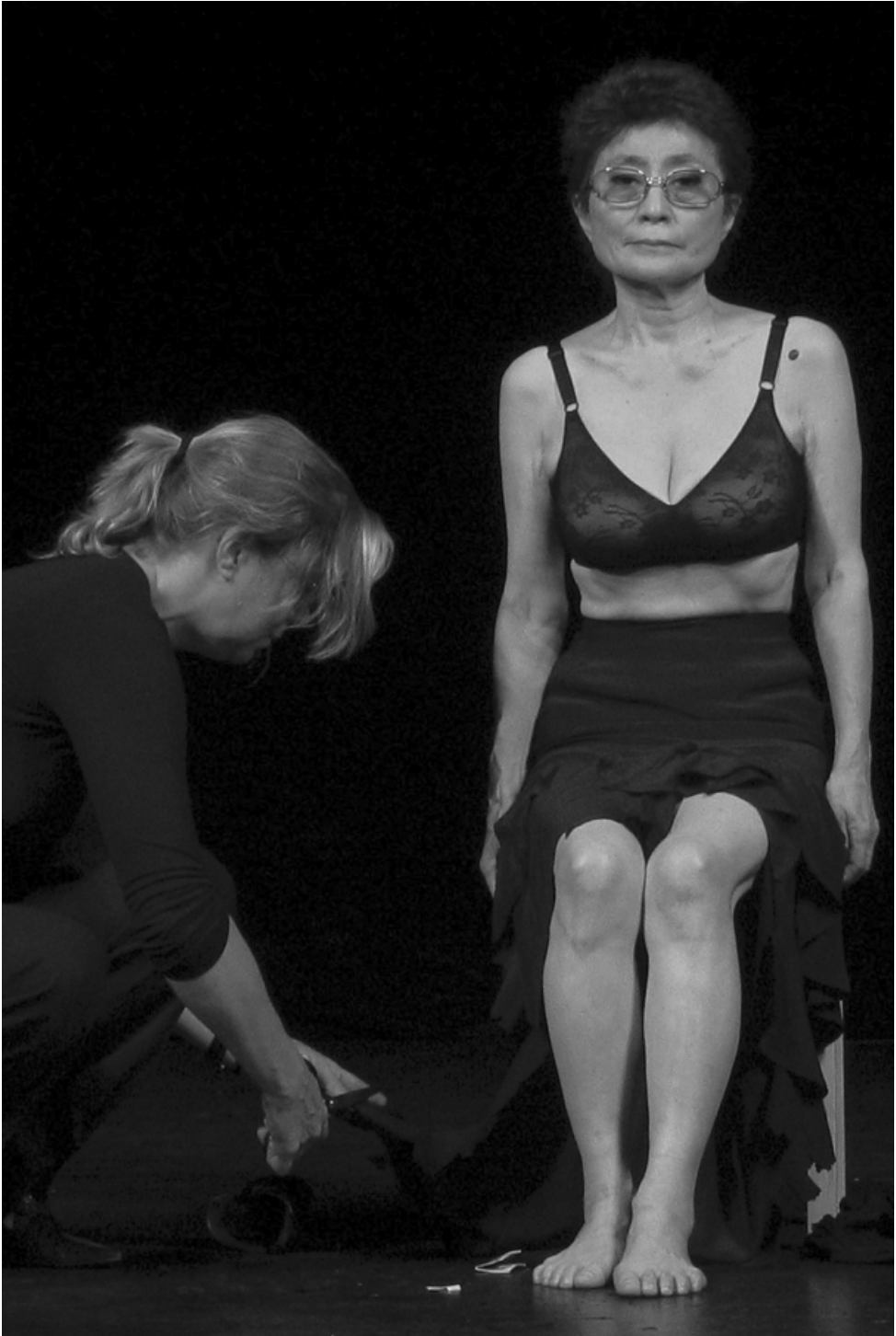

PERFORMING THE OTHER: YOKO ONO'S *CUT PIECE*

JIEUN RHEE

Staged five times by Yoko Ono between 1964 and 1966 in Kyoto, Tokyo, New York and London, and largely revised for a staging in Paris in 2003, *Cut Piece* (plate 4.1) has been interpreted by some as an exploration of sadism/masochism and violence/victimization. It has also been discussed in terms of feminist discourses on the female body and the male gaze.¹ Given the fame of these events, what has rarely been examined is the function of context – social, cultural, national and ethnic – in the audience response to Ono's performance. Yet, as this paper will reveal, responses were markedly different when *Cut Piece* was performed in Tokyo, where traditions of comportment and readings of the Asian body differ substantially to those in New York and London. From the sacred prostitution cults of Kumano *bikuni* (nomadic nuns of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries)² to the sexual component of the Western artistic avant garde, Ono's performance piece is emblematic of the important role that Asian bodies played in the crucial years of performance art.

The interaction between spectacle and spectator is one of the key features of performance art. The artist assumes the position traditionally taken by the art object and the audience becomes an essential part of the art work. During this process, as Kristine Stiles has pointed out, 'the artist as being-in-the-world visualize[s] the contingency and interdependence of subject identifying with subject' and 'the alienation between subject and object [is] thereby reduced, although not resolved.'³ The outcome of this interaction, according to Amelia Jones, can be powerful enough to merge the roles of the two antipodes. This merging, she argues, suggests the site of intersubjectivity, where 'the subject means always in relationship to others and the locus of identity is always elsewhere.'⁴

Considering Yoko Ono's performance *Cut Piece*, this merging of the two roles, or what Kathy O'Dell describes as a tacit contract between spectator and performer,⁵ is far more complicated. With its venues having a broad geographical scope, *Cut Piece* was performed before very diverse audiences in the 1960s and in 2003. The work suggested an intricate framing of the abrasion between different cultures, contexts and genders. Here the contract between artist and audience no longer remained tacit. It was constantly contested and negotiated.



4.1 Yoko Ono, *Cut Piece*, performed at Théâtre Le Ranelagh, Paris, 2003. Copyright © starfileonline

In this paper, I will attempt to reconstruct the *Cut Piece* of the 1960s in its Japanese and Western stagings by delving into the social and cultural contexts. I argue that the Japanese staging of *Cut Piece* was part of Ono's strategy to establish herself as an avant-garde artist not only in Japan but also in the West. Making use of her idiosyncratic position of dual identity – Japanese artist in the West and New York avant-gardist in Japan – Ono played an 'exotic body' in both settings. *Cut Piece*, in this regard, claims its pivotal position in Ono's oeuvre expressing the issue of 'otherness'. It fed into the respective expectations of differently situated audiences, each yearning to see the 'other' unveiled.

THE BEGINNINGS: ONO YOKO/YOKO ONO, 1933–1961

Born in 1933 in Tokyo, Ono spent most of her childhood moving back and forth between Japan and the United States because of her father's career as a high-ranking executive of Yokohama Specie Bank.⁶ Ono's ambivalent feelings towards the United States and her precocious awareness of otherness are clearly expressed in her recollections of her childhood. In an interview in 1989, she recalled: 'I would go to see a film, and find that the baddies in the movie were Orientals. People booing in the dark. Some people threw stones at us in the streets. It was getting obvious that we were not welcomed in the States.'⁷

The Onos eventually returned to Japan in 1941, just before the United States entered the war. Perplexed by the sudden changes of old friendships into enemies, Ono did not easily fit into war-driven Japanese society. 'I was devastated,' she recalls. 'Only a few months before that [the war] I was going to a Long Island school pledging allegiance to the flag every morning. I always got sweet valentine cards from my classmates. I loved my American friends, and now suddenly they were at war with my people.'⁸

To avoid the frequent bombings, the Onos (except for her father Yeisuke, who had been stationed in Hanoi since 1942) were evacuated from their Tokyo residence and moved to a rural farm village at the peak of the war in 1945. Although back in her native country, Ono was sometimes taunted by the local children for '*bata kusai*' (smelling like butter – a reference to westernization and in particular to Americanization).⁹ It can be argued that Ono's acute sense of otherness developed from this ambivalent position in her childhood, swaying as it did between being 'Japanese' and 'American.'

In late 1952 Ono once again moved with her family to the United States. She enrolled at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York, where she focused on contemporary poetry and composition. In the liberal ambiance of Sarah Lawrence, Ono's artistic impulse grew strong as her relationship with her parents grew apart. In 1955 she dropped out of Sarah Lawrence and eloped with Toshi Ichiyanagi, a Juilliard student from Japan, who soon became Ono's first husband. The couple moved to Manhattan and from there Ono began her artistic life as an avant-garde performer.

Like other struggling artists, she supported herself by doing odd jobs. She and Ichiyanagi gave lessons in traditional Japanese arts at the Japan Society, and spent the rest of their time in the Juilliard music library studying Western music. Ichiyanagi was originally trained in classical music, but he soon indulged in electronic composition and twelve-tone music. As an accomplished pianist and avant-garde composer, he was associated with John Cage and other avant-garde musicians in New York. Through this friendship, the couple became regulars in the Cage circle.¹⁰

Cage's revolutionary composition classes at the New School for Social Research¹¹ led to his prominence in the New York avant-garde scene during the late 1950s and early 1960s. According to Ono, she and Ichiyanagi became acquainted with Cage through atonal composer Stephan Wolpe, who had met Cage when the two were teaching at Black Mountain College.¹² Disillusioned with Western beliefs in modernism and progressive rationalism after the war, many postwar intellectuals and artists sought alternatives in Asian philosophies and aesthetics, activities which reached a peak in the 1950s and 1960s.¹³ Cage's experiments with chance and indeterminacy, for example, were strongly influenced by Zen Buddhism, which he studied with Suzuki Daisetz, a visiting lecturer at Columbia University during the 1950s. In this context, being Japanese was not entirely a disadvantage in the changed milieu of the New York avant garde. Although Japanese artists such as Ono, Yayoi Kusama, Shusaku Arakawa and On Kawara were well received in New York, they were never considered 'major' figures, but rather as an interesting influx of a non-Western and anti-rationalist aesthetic.¹⁴

From December 1960 to June 1961 Ono and La Monte Young organized a series of legendary performances and installations featuring artists such as Richard Maxfield, Ichiyanagi, Simon Forti, Henry Flynt and Robert Morris. Beate Sirota Gordon, former director of performing arts programs for the Japan Society in New York, has acknowledged that during the Chambers Street years, Ono had 'one foot in the avant-garde and the other in traditional Japanese culture'.¹⁵ As part of *arubaito*, or to make ends meet (the German word *Arbeit* has often been used in Japanese to refer to a second job), Ono 'demonstrated calligraphy, recited *haiku*, folded *origami* and performed the tea ceremony at various functions'.¹⁶ As a Japanese person, Ono's presentation of her nation's cultural heritage was entirely legitimate, regardless of her own personal aspiration to be an artist of Western avant-garde music. This ethnic frame was not limited to her *arubaito*. Soon Ono began to incorporate traditional Japanese culture in her avant-garde work by using sumi ink and calligraphic techniques.

Associating with avant-garde artists and composers through her Chambers Street series, Ono, in time, became acquainted with another crucial figure in her artistic career: the form-giver of *Fluxus*, George Maciunas. Ono mounted her first solo exhibition, *Paintings and Drawings by Yoko Ono*, at Maciunas's newly opened AG gallery in 1961. A few months later her first recital, *Works by Yoko Ono*, followed. In the *New York Times*, critic Andy Rich sarcastically described Ono's Carnegie Recital Hall concert:

Here are some of the things that happened in almost total darkness at Carnegie Recital Hall late yesterday afternoon, all in the name of music: Against a taped background of mumbled words and wild laughter a girl spoke earnestly about peeling a grapefruit, squeezing lemons and counting the hair on a dead child [. . .] The works were titled, respectively, 'A Grapefruit in the World of Park,' 'Piece for Strawberries and Violin,' and 'AOS – To David Tudor.' Whether or not time will prove Miss Ono a master of musical expressiveness, there can be no denying her skill at concocting titles. Especially since neither strawberries nor violins were anywhere in evidence.¹⁷

Another reviewer in the *New York Herald Tribune* misspelt her name – he called her Yoke One.¹⁸ It was during this period that Ono decided to visit Tokyo for the first time in almost ten years. Ichiyanagi, who had been enjoying a successful career in the Japanese music world, urged Ono to join him in Japan. Her opportune visit in 1962 was followed by the arrival of John Cage in Japan in October.

NOWHERE LIKE HOME

Ono's Japanese debut at the Shogetsu Hall in Tokyo in May 1962 opened with her solo performance of *A Piano Piece to See the Sky*. The piece ended with Ono lighting a match and smoking a cigarette in slow motion (a performance called *Lighting Piece*), which she had composed in 1955 in the form of instructions.¹⁹ Other parts of the performance included *A Piece for Strawberries and Violin* and *The Pulse*, which featured Japanese performers engaged in mundane acts – eating fruit, breaking things and making sounds with toy instruments (plate 4.2).²⁰ An anonymous Tokyo reviewer reported that the audience:



4.2 *The Pulse*, performed at Shogetsu Art Centre, Tokyo, 1962. Reproduced from *Yes Yoko Ono*, exhib. cat., 2000, 151. Copyright © Shogetsu Art Museum, Tokyo.

seems to have had unusual experiences ... seeing the sequence of these apparently senseless mundane acts. It is not an art that has already been completed, but an art from which the audience can receive something by witnessing the unfolding of nonsense acts, experiencing the process together with the performers ... as can be said about the likes of John Cage, this is not a rare rebellion against art, but the extremely natural act of testing, on the same level as daily life, as in life equals not knowing the boundaries of art.²¹

As a writer of one of the few favourable reviews of Ono's Japanese concert, this unknown author was sympathetic to the Cagean concept of indeterminacy. By contrast, most of Ono's Japanese reviewers criticized her for her lack of seriousness and originality. Interestingly, the most negative review was written by the American academic Donald Richie. Published in 1962 in one of the major Japanese art magazines, *Geijutsu Shinchō*, Richie wrote that:

The works of Yoko Ono, who has just got back from New York, at first looks like avant-garde art. In other words, she seems to have misunderstood herself as modern. The concert consisted of hours of lighting matches and beating on a piano. There was not much [to see] except some trivia. The best it presented was nothing but the voluntary participation of some 'elites' of Japanese avant-garde, those who were usually too busy to show up, but this time managed to attend this event [...] in terms of Yoko Ono's work, I don't see any originality at all. It seems that her ideas, taken especially from John Cage, were all borrowed from New York. For example, her performance of 'sitting in front of a piano for 5 minutes, beating the piano chord madly for 5 minutes' is almost the copy of Cage's. Her other programmes showed an amateur talent with an originality seen only on an elementary school field.²²

Another reviewer curtly said: 'Standing in front of a piano is no longer an avant-garde art. The avant-garde art has become a commodity.'²³

In considering the usually warm reception given to Ichiyangi's concerts in Japan, Ono's fellow avant-garde artist, Nam June Paik, has explained this overall harsh criticism of Ono as 'the consequences of the traditional predominance of men over women in Asia'.²⁴ On the one hand, through her connection with Ichiyangi and his colleagues in the Tokyo avant garde, Yoko Ono attracted media attention as an avant-garde artist from New York.²⁵ On the other hand, Ono was treated as a rare (if not the only) 'female' member of the patriarchal world of the Japanese avant garde. As such, she was frequently the target of negative rumours – such as that she was a 'terrible wife' or that she had a suspicious past.²⁶

By being labelled as a follower of John Cage, Ono was hindered from being treated as an artist in her own right. Midori Yoshimoto argues that Ono's contemporaneous attempted suicide and a resultant nervous breakdown were largely caused by the trauma of such harsh criticism.²⁷ Whether those malicious rumours and criticisms were based on personal jealousy of Ono, who shortly after her arrival became the Cinderella of the Japanese avant garde, or whether they were caused by the deep-rooted patriarchal values of Asian traditions,



4.3 John Cage, *Music Walk*, performed by Cage, David Tudor, Yoko Ono and Mayuzumi Toshiro, Shogetsu Art Centre, Tokyo, 1962. Reproduced from *Yes Yoko Ono*, exhib. cat., 2000, 232. Copyright © Shogetsu Art Museum, Tokyo.

1962 must have been a very difficult time for her as an artist as well as for her as a woman.

One thus has to ask whether Ono had been dismissed by the Japanese critics because she was a woman – more precisely, a westernized woman who challenged the traditional taboos of Japanese womanhood? Defiantly, Ono continued to proselytize avant-garde music in the *Shogetsu Contemporary Series*, and when Cage visited Japan in October 1962, Ono accompanied him and David Tudor as a performer in their Japanese concert tour (plate 4.3).

In summing up Ono's activities in Japan, the film-maker Takahiko Iimura has written that, 'Yoko's return to Japan was not a mere homecoming. It had a *strategy for the West* which was revealed in her later careers in New York and London.'²⁸ Iimura does not give a clear explanation about what this strategy was, or why he perceived it as directed at the West rather than at the Japanese art world. But his remark seems to suggest that Ono wished to position herself primarily in relation to the West – but did so through a particularly 'native' frame. This became most explicit with Ono's staging of *Cut Piece*.

PRESENTATION OF THE OTHER: *CUT PIECE*

First performed on 20 July 1964, at the Yamaichi Hall in Kyoto, *Cut Piece* was presented as part of the programme entitled *Contemporary American Avant-Garde Music Concert: Insound and Instructure* (plates 4.4 and 4.5). As the title suggests, Ono

was presented as an 'American avant-garde musician' rather than as a Japanese or Japanese-American artist. She appeared with two American artists – Anthony Cox, Ono's second husband, and Al Wonderlick. With the exception of the original programme, few if any documents about the Kyoto performance are available. Most of the information regarding the Kyoto performance is based on Ono's later comments:

One person came on the stage. . . . He took the pair of scissors and made a motion to stab me. He raised his hand, with the scissors in it, and I thought he was going to stab me. But the hand was just raised there and was totally still. He was standing still . . . with the scissors . . . threatening me.²⁹

The potential for violence and the image of the male aggressor and female victim have often led commentators to read this piece as a proto-feminist work. Indeed, Ono herself later acknowledged the feminist aspects of *Cut Piece*.³⁰ However, Ono insists that she originally conceived of *Cut Piece* as being about 'the power of giving.'³¹ In contrast to her recollection of possible violence, she has also emphasized the ritual-like reverence of the Kyoto performance scene. Ono remembers that, 'It was very, very difficult for people to come up. So there would be



4.4 Yoko Ono, *Cut Piece*, performed at the Yamaichi Hall, Kyoto, 1964. Reproduced from *Yes Yoko Ono*, exhib. cat., 2000, 159. Copyright © Yoko Ono, courtesy of the artist.



4.5 Programme for *Contemporary American Avant-Garde Music Concert: Insound and Instructure*. Reproduced from *Yes Yoko Ono*, exhib. cat., 2000, 311. Copyright © Jon Hendricks.

very long silences and then you would hear the scissors cutting. There were quiet and beautiful silences – quiet and beautiful moments.³²

The second Japanese staging of *Cut Piece* was at the Sogetsu Kaikan Hall in Tokyo on 11 August 1964, as part of the *Yoko Ono Farewell Concert: Strip-Tease Show* (plate 4.6). An unidentified Japanese review of this concert was recently republished by Kathy O'Dell, together with photo documentation of *Cut Piece*. In this review, headlined ‘The title is “Stripping” – avant-garde musician, Ono Yoko’s recital’:

In the centre of the stage without any props, under the hazy spotlight, a woman sits. From their seats, the audience ran up onto the stage, starting to cut out her clothing with scissors. Soon the scissors cut even her underwear. With the theme of striptease, it is a scene from Ono Yoko’s recital held at Sōgetsu Art Center the other day. . . . Now, one may say ‘there the sign of essence was performed’ and bow down his head, and another may say ‘if no sounds were made, give me back my money’ and raise his arms in the air. Anyway, Avant-garde music is a mysterious thing.³³

Not surprisingly, given Ono’s concert title *Striptease*, it seems that the Japanese writer read this piece as analogous to a sex show.³⁴ Did Ono fail to communicate her idea of the ritual of giving? Or, was a striptease, in fact, an act of giving in a Japanese context?

In Shinto mythology, Amaterasu, the goddess of the sun, provides us with a possible clue for this religious/sexual conundrum. According to the



4.6 Yoko Ono, *Cut Piece*, performed at Shogetsu Art Centre, Tokyo, 1964.
Reproduced from *Yes Yoko Ono*, exhib. cat., 2000, 311. Copyright © Yoko Ono,
courtesy of the artist.

myth, Amaterasu locked herself in a cave after being violated by her own brother Susano, the god of wind. The world became miserable without light and warmth. Other deities desperately tried to convince Amaterasu to come out and shine again, but they failed. It was Ame-no-Uzume, the Dread Female of Heaven, who succeeded in luring Amaterasu out by performing a divine striptease in front of the assembly of gods. When the performance reached its peak, Ame-no-Uzume exposed her sacred genitalia. The surrounding deities laughed at this scene and clapped their hands. Becoming curious about all this commotion, Amaterasu left her cave, and, so the story goes, there was light once again.³⁵ If Ame-no-Uzume's

striptease caused the sun goddess to leave her hiding place, what did Ono's performance provoke in Japan in 1964?

In her later accounts of *Cut Piece*, Ono downplayed her Japanese performances. She wrote about *Cut Piece* at length in an autobiographical essay for the Japanese magazine *Bungei Shunju* in 1974, discussing it in the context of her return to New York. She never mentioned the first and second performances of *Cut Piece* in Japan, thereby giving the impression that *Cut Piece* had first been performed in New York. And yet, intriguingly, she elucidated the idea of 'giving':

Instead of giving the audience what the artist chooses to give, the artist gives what the audience chooses to take. That is to say, you cut and take whatever part you want [...] I went onto the stage wearing the best suit I had. To think that it would be OK to use the cheapest clothes because it was going to be cut anyway would be wrong. I felt that it was my genuine contribution [...] I could feel that the audience members who came up to the stage were very serious. They did not come up noisily in groups, but *very ritually and seriously*.³⁶

Probing Ono's notion of 'giving', scholars have searched for its connections with Asian theological beliefs. According to Barbara Haskell and John C. Hanhardt, *Cut Piece* was inspired by an allegorical story of the Buddha that Ono used to hear in her childhood.³⁷ The *Jataka* tale of the 'Hungry Tigress' relates how Buddha gives himself to the world upon any request made of him.³⁸ In his previous life, *Mahasattva* (Great Being: Buddha in his last earthly incarnation) came across a hungry tigress with her seven cubs. Buddha allowed her to eat his body, so that she could produce milk for her starving cubs. At the very moment when the tigress devoured Buddha's body, so the story goes, Buddha entered the realm of supreme awareness. Haskell and Hanhardt identified the artist's giving with the Buddha's giving. By letting the audience cut off her clothing – an extension of her body, in a McLuhanian sense – Yoko Ono enacted the Buddha's giving.

The artist's act of 'giving' in *Cut Piece*, however, is expressed only in much later accounts. Neither the documentation of *Cut Piece* in the 1960s nor even Ono's own script make any reference to this notion of 'giving'.³⁹ One must thus ask if the Japanese performance of *Cut Piece* was regarded as a sensational striptease, or whether it was understood as a ritual of giving? It is possible that these seemingly opposite meanings were not really contradictory for the Japanese audience. Both the Shinto-origin myths of Amaterasu / Ame-no-Uzume and Buddhist themes of self-sacrifice, as we have seen, involved transformations via bodily giving or sexual display. Moreover, in the late Muromachi and early Edo periods (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries), the Kumano *bikuni*, the nuns from Kumano, travelled around the country giving sermons and proselytizing whilst also engaging in prostitution.⁴⁰ These histories were even more intertwined with the notion of female 'giving' in service of a higher goal.

In her study of seventeenth – and eighteenth-century travel novels, lay Buddhist essays, and popular literature of the Edo period that discusses Kumano

bikuni, Ikumi Kaminishi has suggested that given the stiff fundraising quotas under which they had to live, prostitution was the most available solution to the nuns. For the Edo lay Buddhist men, these sexual aspects of Kumano *bikuni* must have been more attractive than the religion itself.⁴¹ Embracing two drastically different female images – the Buddhist nun as a vehicle of enlightenment and the shamanic priestess (*miko*) as a prostitute dancer – the Kumano *bikuni* reveal the complexity of female sexuality in Japan in the Edo period.

If the Kumano *bikuni* were sacred figures who sometimes turned into prostitutes, *Eguchi* stands for a courtesan who becomes divine. The portrait of a courtesan entitled *Eguchi no Kimi* (plate 4.7) by Maruyama Ōkyo is a good example to illuminate this prostitute/sacred puzzle. In this painting Maruyama portrays a prostitute from Eguchi riding on a white elephant (the animal usually associated with Fugen *bosatsu*: *bodhisattva* of wisdom).⁴² According to legend, the famous preacher of the *Lotus Sutra* Shōku Shōnin once saw a performance by a courtesan. In his human eyes, a very appealing woman was striking a drum and singing a mundane song. But whenever Shōku closed his eyes and joined his palms in prayer, he had a vision of Fugen *bosatsu* riding on a white elephant, and the courtesan's song was transformed into the *bodhisattva*'s sermon on universal salvation.⁴³

In this context, we can assume that it was not difficult for most pre-modern Japanese to consider prostitutes as living *bosatsu*, who gave pleasure to their male customers to fulfil a bodily *huse* (giving away for the masses). What then are the probabilities of these notions – Buddhist, Shinto, or otherwise – still holding sway in 1960s Japan?

Shinto, 'the way of the gods', was the focus of widespread interest during the surge in nationalism and the rise of fascism in the 1930s. Considered



4.7 Maruyama Ōkyo, *Eguchi no Kimi*, 1794. Copyright © Seikado bunko Art Museum.

as Japan's 'indigenous religion', this seemingly outmoded belief that used to be a subordinate to Buddhism gained great importance as the spiritual core of the nation. Emphasizing the emperor's sacerdotal roles, Shinto shrines and priests were carefully regulated and patronized by the government, and Shinto rituals became mandatory for schoolchildren in Japan as well as its colonies.⁴⁴ How then did this 'traditional' notion connect with the audience of Ono's avant-garde performance? Kuki Shuzō's bestseller *Iki no Kōzō* (*The Structure of the Edo Aesthetic Style*) suggests an answer.

First published in 1930, in the midst of heated debates on *Nihonjinron* (Japanese uniqueness discourse),⁴⁵ *Iki no Kōzō* addressed an elusive sense of style, *iki*, which had been widely circulated in the erotically charged Edo pleasure quarters. In Kuki's reading of Edo, the pleasure quarters were always portrayed as a 'landscape of the spirit'. Considering *Iki no Kōzō*'s wide readership throughout the 1960s, the effortless intertwining of the sexual and the spiritual was as familiar in modern Japan as it had been in the Edo period.⁴⁶ The nationalist revival of Shinto during the war years also connects the old practice of *Kagura* (a ritual, 'that which pleases the gods', where a Shinto priestess re-enacts Ame-no-Uzume's sacred body revelation) with the modern version which was common in the red-light districts of Tokudashi.⁴⁷

Japanese society of the 1960s was in social and political turmoil. The so-called 'Anpo crisis' surrounding the first renewal of the United States – Japan Security Treaty of 1960 revealed the complexity of Japan's relationship with America. Ratified in the last months of the occupation in 1952, the treaty allowed the United States to station a large number of American troops on Japanese soil. Considered part of the United States' Cold War strategy, the treaty spurred controversy and opposition from the beginning. Upon its renewal in 1960, Japanese intellectuals and artists played significant roles in mass protests against it.⁴⁸ These grand-scale protests and demonstrations, however, proved ineffective. The subsequent feeling of impotence and pessimism led to the so-called 'Anpo spirit', which renounced political ideology altogether in favour of nihilistic anarchism.⁴⁹ In the Japanese art world, aspirations of artists who wanted to be free from the burdens of the past and participate in international artistic movements coexisted with strongly held undercurrents that emphasized Japanese 'originality'.⁵⁰ In this context, the controversial values of *Nihonjinron* were reignited and Kuki Shuzo's book acts as just one example of this resurgence. Yoko Ono arrived in Japan in the midst of these debates.

Given the reviews of Ono's farewell concert, *Strip-Tease Show* and the images that she presented – such as that of an 'American avant-garde artist' – the Japanese audience might not fully have grasped the religious connotations of *Cut Piece* for which Ono argued in later years. But other meanings can possibly be understood in relation to its Japanese staging. As a New York-based avant-garde artist, who performed under the title *American Avant-garde Music*, how was Yoko Ono perceived by the Japanese art world in the early 1960s? Did the focus on 'cutting' have more profound meanings for a Japanese audience?

More than mere material for covering and commodity for consumption, the clothing worn by a person conveys specific cultural meanings. Liza Dalby describes the concept of clothing in Japanese culture:

In Japan, clothing and wearer merge. Even now, 'antique kimono' are cheap for foreigners because there is little market for other people's cast off clothing among Japanese. Something of the original wearer's soul has irrevocably imbued the garment.⁵¹

Like the McLuhanian notion of a medium as the 'extension of body', the intertwining of the human or supernatural spirit with a garment in Japanese culture was a crucial part of Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece*. If *Cut Piece* was received as the artist's giving of herself to the audience, we may regard the clothing of a New York avant-garde artist as 'foreign', as the concert title *American Avant-garde Music* suggested. The implicit violence of the only encounter Ono described may have reflected the postwar ambivalence towards things 'American' in Japan.

Interestingly, the making of the traditional kimono, which is assembled through sewing bolts of fabric that have been cut as little as possible, can be seen as the antipode of the performance of maximum cutting in *Cut Piece*.⁵² The notion of *kami*, best translated as spirit in a broader sense, also adds more significance to the Japanese reception of *Cut Piece*. H. Neill McFarland tersely defines the concept of *kami* as the 'spiritualization of all things in the Universe'.⁵³ Mostly drawn from the Japanese sense of empathy with nature and the belief that all things have life and feeling, the concept of *kami* has also influenced the way that the Japanese see non-natural things. The concept of object in Japanese is also spiritualized, as expressed by the word *mono*, translated as object or thing. In its original sense, this word has an inclusive designation signifying both the actual thing (the visible) and what lies behind it (the invisible). *Mono*, therefore, also expresses the organic existence of the non-organic.⁵⁴ If we posit *Cut Piece* as the implicit destruction of western clothing contrasted with the construction of the traditional kimono, then, we may attempt to understand the Japanese reception of *Cut Piece* in terms of the tension between the aboriginal and the western.

Kimono means literally 'things to wear'. Before the Meiji Period, there was no need to create an alternative word for kimono. However, from Meiji onwards, the difference between Japanese and western clothing gave birth to words such as *wafuku*, or Japanese clothing, and *yōfuku*, the word coined for western dress.⁵⁵ In this regard, we can think of the Japanese audience of *Cut Piece* as those who were invited to cut off a piece of *yōfuku*, thus destroying the western *kami* associated with it.

SHIFTING IDENTITY: GEISHA/BIKUNI/STRIPPER

The Japanese versions of *Cut Piece* were largely dismissed by the Japanese critics, perhaps because they were considered as unoriginal appropriations of western forms. Presented as a high priestess of Cagean avant-garde art, Ono was not well received as a creative artist by Japanese art critics. In an interview with *Tokyo*

Yukan, just before her return to New York, Ono expressed her feelings about leaving Japan. 'I think', she said, when asked about her art, 'that the summit of what a human really wants to express is a striptease, and this is also the apogee of the arts.'

Such a remark offers a radically different interpretation of her art from that which Ono later insisted was the artist's role of 'giving'. The *Tokyo Yukan* article continues, 'I go back to New York and I will stay there almost permanently. I have no guarantee to be better off in New York, but I cannot really adjust myself in Tokyo. I almost want to escape from [Tokyo].'⁵⁶ The overall picture suggests that Ono's activities in Japan were not entirely successful. But can we dismiss her years in Japan merely as a failure to adjust to the Japanese art world? Or, as Iimura suggested, was her 'return' to Japan part of her strategy for the West?

Despite her bitter experience with the Japanese press, soon after her return from Japan, Ono staged her third *Cut Piece* at the Carnegie Recital Hall in New York City in March 1965 (plate 4.8). Although the audience participation in the denuding of the female performer caused a sensation, we have only one reviewer from the *Villager* (New York) who actually discussed *Cut Piece*.⁵⁷ Years later, in 1994, Ono described *Cut Piece* as ritualistic and serious, and recalled that in comparison with the New York audience, the Japanese audience had been very discrete in cutting away her clothing.⁵⁸ In fact, working at the film documentary of Ono's New York performance of *Cut Piece*, it is difficult to find any clue to stable ritual in the performance.

Filmed in 1965 by Albert and David Maysles, the documentary presents a few moments of 'wild' scenes. One man in a dark business suit, perhaps in his late twenties or early thirties, comes up on to the stage and circles around Ono with a pair of scissors – the audience laughs and applauds at this scene – making his predatory presence the dominating figure of the scene. Ono begins to look quite shaken. Another man grabs her left breast and cuts a small piece from the tailored area around it. Ono – who, according to the script for *Cut Piece* is expected to maintain her poise – glances at him. In a close-up, we can see her eyes beginning to fill with tears. Her poise is clearly disturbed; her breathing becomes heavier. A moment later, the same man who has grabbed Ono's breast returns. He turns to the audience and says, 'It might take some time.' People laugh, and somebody in the audience asks him 'How long?' Brandishing a pair of scissors, he answers, 'Not too long.' He then approaches Ono, slowly cuts in the middle of her slip and exposes her brassiere. Moving her body in a defensive gesture, Ono soon restrains herself from reacting. She bites her lips and endures the moment. The man goes for the left shoulder strap. A voice from the audience says 'Playboy.' People laugh and clap. What was ambivalent aggression in Kyoto seems here to have become a burlesque. The documentary shows no evidence of ritual seriousness in the New York performance; instead *Cut Piece* was received as an exotic striptease.

The fourth and fifth performances followed at the Africa Centre in London on 28 and 29 September 1966, as part of the *Destruction in Art Symposium* (plate 4.9).

In each of these Western performances Ono was perceived primarily as 'a young Oriental lady', rather than as a New York avant-garde artist. The 'strategy for the west' required a reinscription of the performer's body as now insistently Eastern in a Western frame. Alaster Niven, administrator of the Africa Centre, witnessed the charged atmosphere at the London performance and described it at length:

Next to appear on stage was a young Oriental lady, soberly dressed in a woolen two piece suit, whom the compère informed the audience had recently arrived in this country and subscribed to the name of Yoko Ono. . . .

As Yoko proceeded to sit cross-legged on the floor the compère invited the audience to cut off pieces of her costume and to fix the pieces to a large canvas on an easel at the side of the stage. A 'Study in Audience Participation' he called it. After a slow start, the audience responded with



4.8 Yoko Ono, *Cut Piece*, performed at Carnegie Recital Hall, New York, 1965. Reproduced from *Yes Yoko Ono*, exhib. cat., 2000, 161. Copyright © Yoko Ono, courtesy of the artist.

enthusiasm but it was noticeable that as the clothing disappeared the cut pieces became smaller and even the reporters forgot their notebooks and pencils and became contemporary artists.

When the last piece of tunic had been removed and Yoko sat motionless in a 'G' string the audience relaxed thinking the show was over. Not so, the compère requested a volunteer to cut off this last fragile garment. For a few moments nobody responded until, to cheers from the onlookers, a less inhibited Nigerian member of the Africa Centre, deftly severed the string and posted it centrally on the canvas. ...⁵⁹

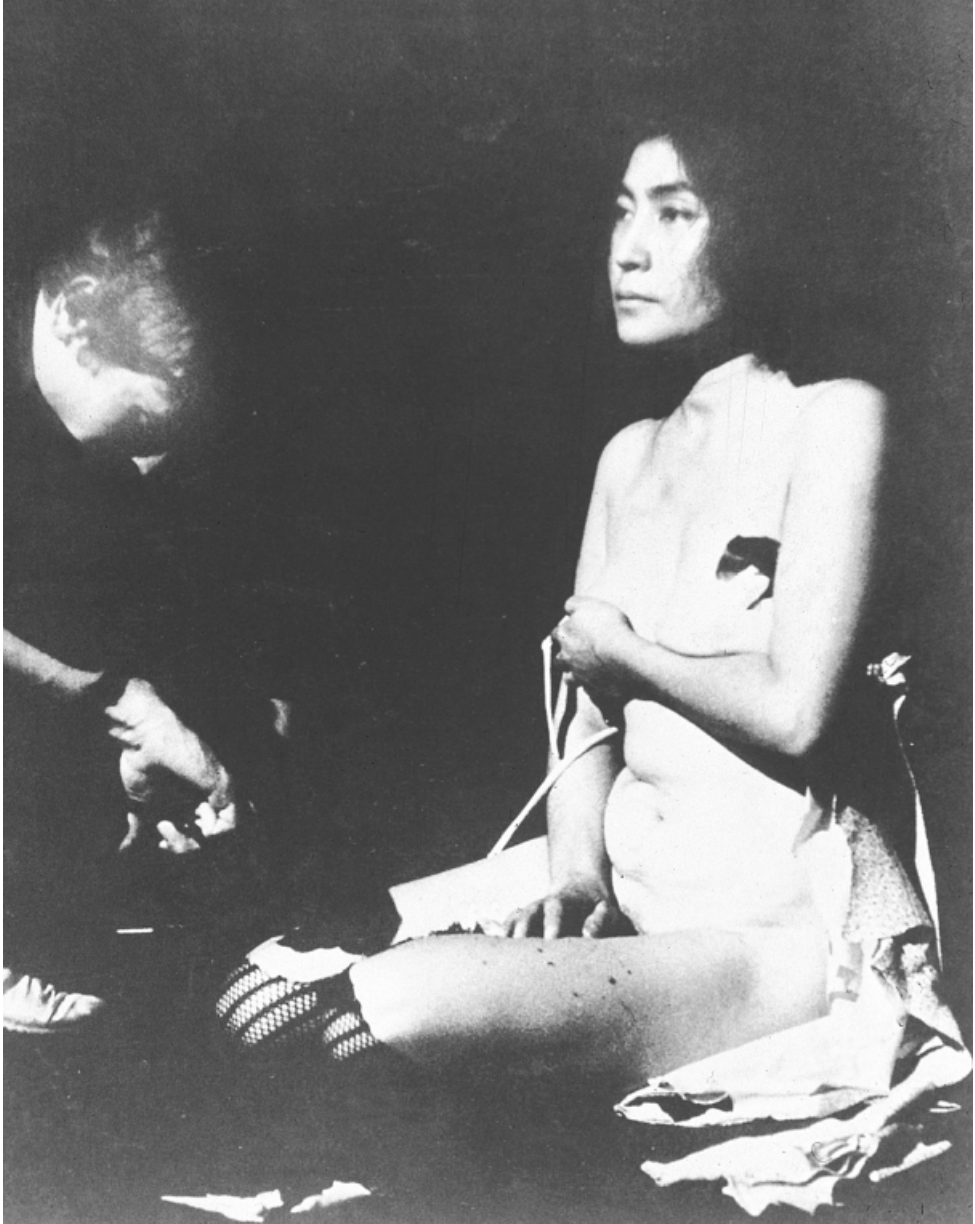
Yet again in London, *Cut Piece* was received as an exposure of an 'exotic' female body.⁶⁰ Subsequent interpretations have described *Cut Piece* as 'the political question of women's physical vulnerability as mediated by regimes of vision',⁶¹ or the 'objectification of the "other" on the presentation of the self as a victim'.⁶² These accounts, however, miss out on Ono's primary strategy, her use of 'posing'. Her victimization here is not simply the passive objectification of the Japanese female body. It can also be seen as Yoko Ono's attempt to negotiate her position in the Western art world. Interestingly, Ono introduced herself in the programme accompanying the London performance as a Japanese traditional art practitioner as well as an avant-garde artist. The programme contained a list of the traditional Japanese art forms that she had mastered. This fact may suggest that she was actively positioning herself in the Western art world through an ethnic frame.⁶³

Drawing on the classical myth of Medusa, Craig Owens interprets the hegemony of gaze and pose in the relationship of the seer and the seen. According to the myth, Medusa's gaze had a fatal power to turn all who come within her sight to stone. For Owens, it is 'the power of creating ... statues', the frozen images of the seer.⁶⁴ In the myth, ironically, Medusa's power to petrify the seer was reflected back on to Medusa herself. Using his shield as a mirror, the legendary hero Perseus made Medusa the object of her own gaze causing her death. She was petrified into a statue. But was she?

Owens delves into the overlooked part of the narrative. He re-examines the scene and locates 'the moment of arrest' before the moment of seeing: 'first, a terminal moment of arrest; *then and only then*, an initial act of seeing'.⁶⁵ In explaining this pseudo-photographic sequence, Owens argues that posing is 'to present oneself to the gaze of the other as if one were already frozen, immobilized ... *already a picture*'.⁶⁶ The posing is, in fact, a strategy: 'to strike a pose is to pose a threat'.⁶⁷ Quoting Dick Hebdige, Owens inverts the stereotypical hierarchy between the gaze and the object of the gaze, transforming the act of being watched into 'the pleasure of being watched'.⁶⁸

While Ono was actively engaged in the feminist movement of the 1970s, critics like John Rockwell complained about the apparent contradictions within Ono's feminism. He wrote: 'Her whole performance ... seemed designed to provoke an awareness of contradiction - particularly the oddity of her persistent concern with women's integrity coupled with a costume that included hot pants

and black plastic boots up to her knees.⁶⁹ The seeming contradictions of Ono's feminism in the 1970s gain new meaning when her work is viewed as the power of posing, 'the pleasure of being watched'. In another instance, Ono mentioned the pleasure of surrender. She posed the question: 'Are women the only people who know the pride and joy of surrender?'⁷⁰ Indeed, she seems to have known the



4.9 Yoko Ono, *Cut Piece*, performed at Africa Centre, London, 1966. Reproduced from *Yes Yoko Ono*, exhib. cat., 2000, 28. Copyright © Yoko Ono, courtesy of the artist.

pleasure of surrender. She surrendered to the audience through her performance. And the audience's gaze surrendered to her pose.

However, the element of striptease in *Cut Piece* forces the viewer to perceive it in a slightly different way from Owens's gaze/pose dichotomy. In striptease, the audience normally takes pleasure from the ocular mastery of watching while their bodies are passive. But in *Cut Piece* Ono transforms passive audience members into active performers; the artist remains passive and forces the audience to perform the cutting and therefore the denuding. The relationship between striptease performer and audience is therefore inverted. Audience members are put in a position of responsibility for their own pleasure while at the same time, the 'striptease artist' disavows that responsibility by putting herself in the position of 'victim'.

The meanings of *Cut Piece* are supposed to be engendered in each viewer-participant's mind through the negotiation of his or her role within the performance during his or her visual and physical interactions with the artist – alternatively, viewers make an emotional acknowledgement of passivity. However, audience members are not free simply to make up their own individual interpretations of this performance. The dynamics of each performance is heavily indebted to the cultural context of its audience. In terms of Ono's endeavour to position herself both in the Japanese and the Western art worlds, *Cut Piece* played a crucial role. By playing the 'other' on each stage, she sought to enthrall the gaze of her audiences.

Cut Piece, however, was not received with much enthusiasm in Japanese venues. Presented as an 'American avant-garde artist', she was perceived at best as a Cagean artist who followed the Western aesthetic and failed to attain a position as an original and independent artist in her own right. Ono was allegedly 'disguised' in western dress, but the audience cut through that cultural veil that disguised her, revealing the 'truth' of the body beneath – a Japanese body. Perhaps what Ono's Japanese audiences preferred was an 'authentic' artist of the West, 'the other' to Japanese culture, not a Japanese representative of Western art. It is also possible that the 'traditional' (and reinvented) themes of Shinto and Buddhist 'giving' were not acceptable when offered by a westernized source. At the same time, Ono's reintroduction to Japanese culture by means of her thirty-month sojourn became a useful 'strategy for the west'. In presenting her identity as that of an Asian female body, Ono garnered attention as an exotic 'other' in western venues.

EPILOGUE

On 15 September 2003 Ono went on stage at Theatre Le Ranelagh in Paris to perform *Cut Piece* (plate 4.1). It was thirty-nine years after her first *Cut Piece* in Kyoto in 1964. Things had significantly changed. Now in her seventies and through continuous exhibitions and retrospectives in the major cities of the United States, Europe and Asia, Ono was an icon of avant-garde art. This time, the staging of

Cut Piece was to express her hope for world peace. 'When I first performed this piece in 1964,' she stated to the press, 'I did it out of rage and anger. This time, I do it for you with love for the world.'⁷¹

Like many others, Ono was affected by the horror of 11 September and felt that 'everything that I believed had melted down into [nothing].'⁷² Considering her personal experience of terror and violence in the wake of John Lennon's death in 1980, her invitation to people to climb up onto the stage to cut off her clothing must not have been an easy decision. But this time, the idea of 'giving' was better understood by the audience than it had been in the 1960s.

The performance had set out to ask the audience to cut off a postcard-size piece from her clothing, and send it to their loved ones. At the beginning of the performance, Ono recited a short poem on love, and spoke to the audience, 'I love you all ... tonight.' The body exposed with the remains of her undergarment was no longer a spectacle of a striptease. Afterwards, one of the participants told the press that the message she received was that 'you can make peace out of violence.'⁷³

Cut Piece gained considerable art-historical significance during the decades after the 1960s. Ono's playing with the notion of 'otherness' was the central strength of the 1960s' performances of *Cut Piece*, while the 2003 staging was the protest against war and terrorism. With a wide spectrum of interpretations ranging from the 'Hungry Tigress', the feminist discourse in postmodern-critique, to the plea for world peace, *Cut Piece* resonates in the minds of the viewer/participant with an intricate framework to see the self and the other.

Notes

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- 1 Barbara Haskell and John G. Hanhardt, *Yoko Ono: Arias and Objects*, Salt Lake City, 1991, 90–1.
- 2 The Kumano *bikuni* travelled around Japan giving Buddhist sermons while also engaging in prostitution.
- 3 Kristin Stiles, 'Synopsis of the Destruction in Art Symposium (DIAS) and Its Theoretical Significance', *The Act* (New York), 1, Spring 1987, 29.
- 4 Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject*, Minneapolis, 1998, 14.
- 5 Kathy O'Dell, *Contract with the Skin: Masochism, Performance Art, and the 1970s*, Minneapolis, 1998, 2.
- 6 Yoko Ono was born on 18 February 1933 in Tokyo, the eldest child of a prestigious banker family. Her mother, Isoko, was the granddaughter of Yasuda Zenjirō, the founder of Yasuda Bank. Her father Yeisuke Ono was a talented pianist, but gave up his concert career for banking. He became a high-ranking executive at Yokohama Specie Bank, a semi-governmental foreign exchange bank. Given the increasing tension in 1940 between Japan and the United States of America, Yeisuke was sent to the Manhattan branch and, fearing that the US would soon ban all Japanese from entering the country, Mrs Ono and her children joined him. The family moved to Long Island, New York. For Yoko Ono's family background and childhood, see Donald Kirk, 'In Tokyo', *The Ballad of John and Yoko*, eds Jonathan Cott and Christine Doudna, Garden City, NY, 1982, 14–32.
- 7 Gloria Vando Hickok, 'Yoko Ono: Wishes & Surprises', *Helicon*, 20, 1989, 17.

- 8 Vando Hickok, 'Yoko Ono: Wishes & Surprises', 17.
- 9 Alexandra Munroe, 'Spirit of Yes: The Art and Life of Yoko Ono', in *Yes Yoko Ono*, exhib. cat., Japan Society, New York, 2000, 13.
- 10 Munroe, 'Spirit of Yes', 16–18.
- 11 Cage taught a course called 'Composition' from 1956 to 1958 and another called 'Experimental Composition' from 1958 to 1960 at the New School. See Edward M. Gomez, 'Music of the Mind from the Voice of Raw Soul' in *Yes Yoko Ono*, 232.
- 12 Many authors have overplayed the influence of Cage on Ono and Ichiyanagi. Recently, Ono has clarified the situation by stating that: 'Toshi and I attended one lecture – that's all.' Yoko Ono in Gomez, 'Music of the Mind', 237, note 12. (emphasis by Gomez). Calvin Tomkins, for example, says that, 'Ichiyanagi was the only musician in [Cage's] class.' See Tomkins, *Off the Wall: Robert Rauschenberg and the Art World of Our Time*, New York, 1980, 149.
- 13 Some decades earlier Mark Tobey returned from Japan in 1935 after a month of meditation training in a Zen monastery near Kyoto. Later, he claimed that he indeed only knew what painting was after his stay in Japan. Tobey in an interview with William Seitz in 1962, *Tobey Papers*, Archives of American Art, quoted in Helen Westgeest, *Zen in the Fifties: Interaction in Art between East and West*, Amsterdam, 1996, 49.
- 14 Munroe, 'Spirit of Yes', 17.
- 15 Kevin C. Concannon, *Yoko Ono's Cut Piece (1964): A Reconsideration*, Master's thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, Ann Arbor, 1998, 8.
- 16 Beate Sirota Gordon, *The Only Woman in the Room: A Memoir*, Tokyo, 1998, 174. This and subsequent quotes are from the final manuscript, provided to Concannon by publisher Stephen Shaw. It is also documented in Reiko Tomii and Kevin Concannon, 'Chronology: Exhibitions, Concerts, Events, etc.', in *Yes Yoko Ono*, 308.
- 17 Andy Rich, 'Far-Out Music Is Played at Carnegie', *New York Times*, 25, November 1961, 27.
- 18 John Crosby, 'Chimps and Rembrandt', *New York Herald Tribune*, 15, December 1961, 21.
- 19 The descriptions of *A Piano Piece* are in Ichiyanagi, 'Saizen'ei no Koe: Donarudo Richi eno Hanron' ('Voice of the Most Avant-garde: Objection to Donald Richie'), *Geijutsu Shinchō* 13, 8 August 1962, 138, and also in Fujimatsu Hiroshi, 'Kyoko no Kurokami' ('Fictitious Black Hair'), *Bijutsu Techō*, 206, July 1962, 83.
- 20 See Midori Yoshimoto, 'Work of Yoko Ono, 1962', in *Yes Yoko Ono*, 150.
- 21 'Daitanna Kokoromi: Ono Yoko no Ivento' ('Bold Experiment: Ono Yoko's Event'), *Kamera Geijutsu*, 9: 7, July 1962, 26. Parts of this review are quoted in Yoshimoto, 'Work of Yoko Ono' 152, and Kuniharu Akiyama, 'A Single Grapefruit Seed Drops to the Ground to Become a Bronze Sculpture: The Poetic Event World of Yoko Ono' in *Fumie*, exhib. cat. Tokyo, 1990, 11. Translations by the author.
- 22 *Geijutsu Shincho*, 13:7, 1962, 60–1. Translations by the author, with the help of Yong-cheol Kim at the University of Tokyo and Junko Saito at Boston University.
- 23 Miyakawa Jun, 'Anforumeru ikou' ('After Informel'), *Bijutsu Techō*, October 1963, 63. Translations by the author, with the help of Chun Ji-suk.
- 24 Nam June Paik, 'Yoko Ono vs. Ono Yoko', *Book Review 1*, ed. Motoharu Kojima, Tokyo, April 1970, 31–4. Quoted in Kuniharu Akiyama, 'A Single Grapefruit Seed', 13.
- 25 Art critic Ichiro Haryu regretted missing one of Ono's performances after finding out that many important Japanese avant-garde artists who were barely seen together in public attended the event. See, 'Zen'ei bijutsu ni tsukaremashita' ('I grew tired of avant-garde art'), *Geisutsu shinchō*, 13:8, August, 1962, 150–3.
- 26 Yoko Ono, 'Marriage with the First Husband', *Just ME! : Yoko Ono*, Tokyo, 1986, 29–30.
- 27 Midori Yoshimoto, 'Departing Japan to the World: Ono Yoko and the Avant-garde', *Bijutsu Techō*, 55:841, 2003, 85–6.
- 28 Takahiko Iimura, *Yoko Ono*, by the author with the help of Yong-cheol Kim and Junko Saito.
- 29 Quoted from Haskell and Hanhardt, *Yoko Ono: Arias and Objects*, 91.
- 30 Concannon, *A Reconsideration*, 57.
- 31 Concannon, *A Reconsideration*, 11.
- 32 Quoted from Haskell and Hanhardt, *Yoko Ono, Arias and Objects*, 91.
- 33 Quoted in Concannon, *A Reconsideration*, 29. This unidentified magazine clip is reproduced in Kathy O'Dell, 'Fluxus Feminus', *Drama Review*, 41:1., T 153, Spring 1997, 54. Translated from Japanese by Sumie Ota, commissioned by Kevin Concannon.
- 34 The confusion of *Cut Piece* with strip-tease was perhaps initially caused by the concert's overall title and the accompanying performance *Strip-tease for Three*, which featured three chairs on the stage exposed by the raising of a curtain. See Concannon, *A Reconsideration*, 29.
- 35 See *Kojiki*, trans. Donald L. Philippi, Princeton, 1969, 81–3.
- 36 Quoted in *Yoko Ono*, 'If I Don't Give Birth Now, I Will Never Be Able To', *Just ME! : Yoko Ono*, Tokyo, 1986, 34–6. (emphasis by author). The article was originally published in *Bungei Shunju* during Ono's concert tour with the Plastic Ono band in the summer of 1974.

- 37 Haskell and Hanhardt, *Yoko Ono: Arias and Objects*, 91.
- 38 Jatakas are stories of the previous lives of the Buddha, before he became the Buddha Sākya-muni in his last earthly incarnation. So, strictly speaking, it is inaccurate to call him Buddha. I thank Professor ten Grotenhuis at Boston University for pointing out this misunderstanding.
- 39 The document of 1966 on *Cut Piece* was reproduced in *Yoko Ono: To See the Skies*, exhib. cat., ed. Jon Hendricks, Milan, 1990, 66. The script is as follows:
- ‘*Cut Piece* average time: 30’
- First version for single performer:
Performer sits on stage with a pair of scissors in front of him.
It is announced that members of the audience may come on stage—one at a time—to cut a small piece of the performer’s clothing to take with them.
Performer remains motionless throughout the piece.
Piece ends at the performer’s option.
- Second version for audience:
It is announced that members of the audience may cut each others clothing.
The audience may cut as long as they want’.
- 40 The use of *bikuni* refers to one nun or a group of nuns.
- 41 Ikumi Kaminishi, ‘Deciphering Kumano Bikuni, Prostitutes of Faith’, unpublished manuscript, forthcoming. Kaminishi quotes the description of *Kumano bikuni* in the journal of Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716), a German physician of the Dutch East India Company trading ship. See *Kaempfer’s Japan: Tokugawa Culture Observed*, trans. Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey, Honolulu, 1999, 275–6. I thank Professor Kaminishi at Tufts University for generously sharing the unpublished manuscript.
- 42 Sato Yasuhiro, *Yuna-zu*, Tokyo, 1993, 82. The painting by Maruyama Ōkyo is based on the figure Eguchi in *nō* drama, a prostitute who had relationship with the famous Heian poet Saigyō. Fugen bosatsu is the Japanese name for *bodhisattva* Samantabhadra (the Buddha-to-be of wisdom).
- 43 Yasuharu Kobayashi, ed., *Kojidan: Jō*, Koten Bunko 60, Tokyo, 1981, 303–304. Quoted in Michele Marra, ‘The Buddhist Mythmaking of Defilement: Sacred Courtesans in Medieval Japan’, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 52: 1, February 1993, 55–6.
- 44 See Helen Hardacre, *Shinto and the State, 1868–1988*, Princeton, 1989, introduction and chap. 5, 3–38, and 100–112.
- 45 *Nihonjinron* is a discourse on Japanese uniqueness. It emerged during the Meiji period around 1900 and prevailed in the imperialistic decades of the early Showa period (from the late 1920s to the 1940s). After Japan’s defeat, *Nihonjinron* was revived in the 1960s as a way of reconstructing the myth of Japanese ethnic homogeneity. See Peter Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*, New York, 1986.
- 46 Leslie Pincus, *Authenticating Culture in Imperial Japan: Kuki Shuzō and the Rise of National Aesthetics*, Berkeley, 1996, 30.
- 47 See Ian Buruma, *A Japanese Mirror. Heroes and Villains of Japanese Culture*, Harmondsworth, 1984, 12, quoted in Rufus C. Camphausen, *The Yoni: Sacred Symbol of Female Creative Power*, Rochester, VT, 1996, 53–6.
- 48 See Munroe, ‘Spirit of Yes’, 150–1.
- 49 Munroe, ‘Spirit of Yes’, 152.
- 50 Munroe, ‘Sprit of Yes’, 154–6.
- 51 Liza C. Dalby, *Kimono: Fashioning Culture*, New Haven, 1993, 4.
- 52 See also Tetsuō Kitamura, *History of Japanese Clothing*, trans. Ja-Yeon Lee, Seoul, 1999.
- 53 H. Neill McFarland, *The Rush Hour of the Gods*, New York, 1967, 24.
- 54 Masao Yamaguchi, ‘The Poetics of Exhibition in Japanese Culture’, *Exhibiting Cultures*, eds Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine, Washington, 1990, 62. It is only in recent times that the word *mono* has come to be understood in a purely materialistic sense.
- 55 Dalby, *Kimono: Fashioning culture*, 61.
- 56 *Tokyo Yukan* (*Tokyo Evening News*), 8 August 1964 (trans. by the author).
- 57 Warren DeMotte, ‘Yoko Ono Rides Again’, *Villager*, 25, March 1965, 8.
- 58 Robert Enright, ‘Instructions in the Marital Arts: A Conversation with Yoko Ono’, *Border Crossings*, 13:1, January 1994, 37.
- 59 Alaster Niven (Administrator of the Africa Centre) quoted in Kristine E. Stiles, ‘The Destruction in Art Symposium (DIAS): The Radical Cultural Project of Event-Structured Live Art’, PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1987, 610.
- 60 However, it is important to note that this performance was staged as a part of *Destruction in Art Symposium* in London, 1966, which criticized ‘the autonomous character of the traditional arts’ and presented the threatened human body after the 1939–45 war. See Stiles, ‘Synopsis of the Destruction in Art Symposium (DIAS) and Its Theoretical Significance.’
- 61 Thomas Crow, *The Rise of the Sixties*, New York, 1996, 133.
- 62 Kristine Stiles, ‘Between Water and Stone’, in *The Spirit of Fluxus*, exhib. cat., eds. Elizabeth Armstrong and Joan Rothfuss, Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1993, 81.

- 63 My thanks to Jon Hendricks for bringing this programme to my attention. He has also given me much valuable information and has advised me regarding *Fluxus* and Yoko Ono's works.
- 64 Craig Owens, 'The Medusa Effect, or, The Specular Ruse', *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture*, Berkeley, 1992, 196.
- 65 Owens, 'The Medusa Effect, or, The Specular Ruse', 98.
- 66 Owens, 'The Medusa Effect, or, The Specular Ruse', 98.
- 67 Dick Hebdige, 'Posing ... Threats, Striking ... Poses: Youth, Surveillance, and Display', *Sub-Stance*, 37/38, 1983, 86, quoted in Owens, 'Posing', in *Beyond Recognition*, 202.
- 68 Dick Hebdige, 'Posing ... Threats, Striking ... Poses: Youth, Surveillance, and Display', 86, quoted in Owens, 'Posing', 196.
- 69 John Rockwell, 'Pop Music: Yoko Ono's Contradictions', *New York Times*, 26 October 1973, 60.
- 70 Excerpt from 'Surrender to Peace', printed in *New York Times*, 24 January 1983. Quoted in Haskell and Hanhardt, *Yoko Ono: Arias and Objects*, 113.
- 71 Yoko Ono, 'Loving Cut, Spreading of Hope', *Bi-jutsu Techō*, 55:841, November 2003, 52-3. Similarly, she spoke to Reuters on 16 September 2003.
- 72 Ono, 'Loving Cut, Spreading of Hope', 52.
- 73 'Crowd Cuts Yoko Ono's Clothing Off', (CBS/AP) 15 September 2003 available at www.cbsnews.com