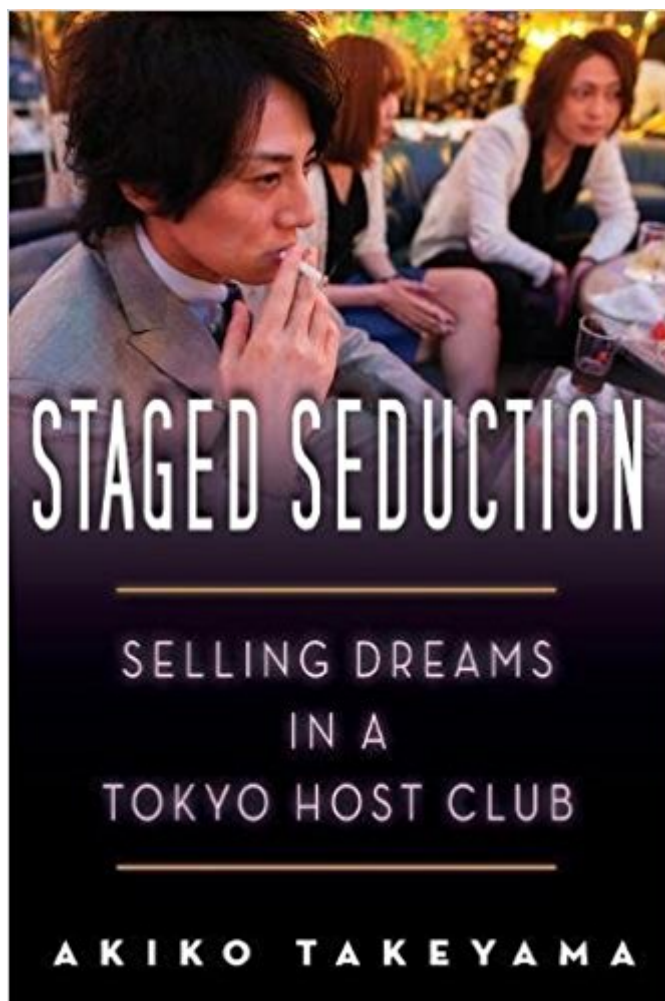


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# Staged Seduction: Selling Dreams In A Tokyo Host Club



## Synopsis

In the host clubs of Tokyo's Kabuki-chō red-light district, ambitious young men seek their fortunes by selling love, romance, companionship, and sometimes sex to female consumers for exorbitant sums of money. *Staged Seduction* reveals a world where all intimacies and feigned feelings are fair game for the hosts who employ feathered bangs, polished nails, fine European suits, and the sensitivity of the finest salesmen to create a fantasy for wealthy women seeking an escape from the everyday. Akiko Takeyama's investigation of this beguiling underground "love business" provides an intimate window into Japanese host clubs and the lives of hosts, clients, club owners, and managers. The club is a place where fantasies are pursued and the art of seduction isn't merely about romance; a complex set of transactions emerges. Like a casino of love, the host club is a site of desperation, aspiration, and hope, in which both hosts and clients are eager to roll the dice. Takeyama reveals the aspirational mode not only of the host club, but also of a Japanese society built on the commercialization of aspiration, seducing its citizens out of the present and into a future where hopes and dreams are imaginable—and billions of dollars can be made.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Seductions performed by male hosts, purchased by female customers, and entwined around money and desire: this is the terrain of Akiko Takeyama's fascinating book. Set in neoliberal Japan when the future is fraught, *Staged Seduction* captures the anxieties of the times in an affective ethnography at once unsettling and bold." (Anne Allison Duke University)"These is so much of

interest in *Staged Seduction*, which will appeal on a number of levels. Takeyama argues that host clubs are emblematic of a neoliberal, post-industrial Tokyo: see what you think. Her study certainly offers a fascinating insight into a recently greatly expanded part of its nightlife." (Joy Hendry *Times Higher Education*) "An exquisite ethnography of host clubs in Tokyo, *Staged Seduction* describes the daily trials of commodified romance for buyers and sellers. It provides a cultural kaleidoscope into the lives of youth confronting a precarious labor market, women and their aging insecurities, and consumption in late capitalism." (Rhacel Salazar Parreñas University of Southern California, author of *Illicit Flirtations: Labor, Migration and Sex Trafficking in Tokyo*) "Staged Seduction is a compelling ethnographic study of commodified romance, aspiration, and desire in neoliberal Japan. With riveting stories of male hosts and their female clients, Takeyama elegantly renders the complex dance of sentiments, interests and affects within an atmosphere of inequality and veiled transactions. This influential work will define future research in affect theory, gender studies and the anthropology of East Asia." (Martin F. Manalansan IV, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign)

Akiko Takeyama is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at University of Kansas.

This small book based on the author's Ph.D is a small gem. It of course tells the story about the male hosts catering in dreams for their female audience, but that is in my opinion just a very small part of what the book is about. The book is way more an empirical "grounded" discussion of modern service and service societies. The book draws on a significant amount of literature inside critical Anthropology and theory, without ever becoming difficult to read. As an ethnographic study I hope it will be read inside my own field of organizational behavior and theory, and in particular service management. Where it can be as an important book as "the managed heart" My only critical comment is, that in a few places the analysis and explanations tilt towards, what I call an asymmetrical and "feminist privilege" performance analysis. Where the wording and dynamics highlighted makes the female patrons "victims of exploitation" - despite the fact using the same criteria of analysis would make the male host - the exploited part. That said the book always comes back to its fundamental line of analyzing the performed lies, feelings and embodiment in the mutual seductive process, which makes it such an important book for our understanding of all services.

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