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Cultural memories of occupation in the Japanese cinema theatre, 1945–52

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Introduction

In some respects the Allied occupation of Japan from 1945 to 1952 would appear to be a relatively straightforward kind of occupation, which could be characterized fairly simply as 'a form of government imposed by force or threat thereof'.[1] Following the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, which ended a protracted and widespread military campaign of fifteen years in east Asia and the Pacific region, Japan was extremely vulnerable to further force, or the threat of force, from the victorious Allies. Prominent historians such as John Dower have argued that the citizens of post-war Japan even embraced defeat.[2] The Allied occupation of Japan, led predominantly by US forces (except in Hiroshima, Tottori, Okayama, Shimane, Yamaguchi and the island of Shikoku), is popularly understood as a successful example of occupation, laying the ground for a special relationship between Japan and the United States for decades to come.

As Mire Koikari notes in this volume, the field of 'Occupation Studies' (*Senryō Kenkyū*) 'has predominantly focused on US rule in mainland Japan', obscuring the roles of other Allied forces (such as British Commonwealth Occupation Forces) and other geographical locations (such as Okinawa). Much English-language and Japanese scholarship repeats this pattern, while Okinawan scholarship has been marginalized in the field.[3] In Japanese film studies we can observe similar tendencies, with some disciplinary specificities. Scholarship in Japanese and in English on cinema under occupation has largely focused on the relationship between Tokyo-based studio personnel and the offices of the US-led Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (hereafter 'SCAP'). In part, this narrow focus is due to the significant amount of documentation on film production and censorship produced by SCAP and archived in Japan and the United States. These materials have allowed film scholars to trace the conception and production of film texts, intertwining film history and occupation history. Occupation personnel have written some of the foundational texts on the cinema culture of the period, published in both Japanese and English.[4]

Another structural factor in the focus on Tokyo-US relations during the occupation is the large number of American films imported and screened during the period. As Hollywood was one of the few thriving film industries by 1945, American-made films dominated global cinema screens in the years of devastation following the end of the Second World War. Furthermore, as film studies as a discipline began in the post-war era, Japan's first film scholars were almost all connected to the occupation in some way. For example, Donald Richie, the first recognized critic and scholar to publish on Japanese cinema in English, first came to Japan with the US occupation force in 1947. The very foundations of the field are therefore tied to a particular experience of the occupation of Japan that privileges the Tokyo-US relationship.

As Koikari argues, this narrow focus is a 'methodological and epistemological blind spot' in studies of the occupation.[5] While we are yet to see significant studies of occupation-era cinema culture in Okinawa and other regions, this chapter attempts to shift focus from Tokyo by presenting material from an ethnographic study of the memories of film viewers in the Kansai region of western Japan. Further moving away from the top-down approach that privileges the accounts of state actors, US occupation personnel and bureaucratic materials such as SCAP memos, the focus of this chapter is the voices of Kansai residents, largely children, during the occupation. In this way, I aim to contribute to the shifting of 'Occupation Studies' away from the dominant focus on Tokyo-US relations, towards the regions and to include grass-roots voices.

In the spirit of this volume, which asserts the impossibility of establishing a catch-all definition of or approach to 'occupation', this chapter further explores living memories of how certain key aims of the Allied occupation of Japan were mediated in order to question the success of these goals. Focusing on the attempts of SCAP to educate the populace about the new rights for women included in the 1947 Constitution of Japan, this chapter explores the role of censored cinema content in communicating occupation-led social reforms. In the living memories of those who grew up in the era, certain aspects of the Allied occupation of Japan appear to have left a different cultural legacy from that which the censors of the time foresaw. Despite a thriving film culture in Japan, audiences did not comply with many of SCAP's suggestions for behavioural change. Ethnographic research with viewers who attended the cinema during this period reveals the limits of how occupation policy shaped cultural expression, and how cultural expression is received and interpreted by occupied peoples. Based on four years of fieldwork in the Kansai region of western Japan, the study on which this chapter is based is comprised of interviews with viewers who regularly attended the cinema during the Allied occupation of Japan; a large-scale questionnaire project with participants born between 1935 and 1950; and participant observation at retrospective film screenings and film clubs specializing in occupation-era cinema. The memories shared by now-elderly viewers suggest the value of an ethnographic approach for understanding the structuring elements behind non-conformist behavioural patterns during occupation. We must distinguish non-compliance and deliberate subversion from bad planning or unfounded expectations on the part of occupation forces and bureaucratic bodies. At the same time, we must also account for changes in memories of occupation over time, as citizens with experience of occupation readjust their recollections to fit with the contemporary socio-political concerns of our globalized

world, and re-narrate the experience of occupation for younger generations. This chapter demonstrates the key role that memories of cinema play in this contemporary interaction, responding to the fundamental question of how occupation shapes cultural expression, and how resulting 'cultures of occupation' can be studied and understood.

The occupation of Japan, 1945–52

A fixation on national 'cultures' and 'values' features prominently in the planning and documentation of occupation, and in accounts of ongoing relationships between occupied societies and the 'occupied'. This has certainly been the case for the US-Japan relationship, often discussed in terms of shared or conflicting 'cultures'. John Dower points to a US obsession with 'culture' during wartime, arguing that 'postwar American fixations on "culture" were rooted in World War II'.[6] Orientation films for soldiers and occupation personnel, such as *Our Job In Japan*, 'gracefully explained that, "Our problem's in the brain, inside of the Japanese head"'.[7] Occupation goals were posited in terms of 'changing Japanese minds by drastically altering the political, social, economic and educational structures that had conditioned them to think and behave as they did'.[8] The popular cinema was identified as one means to change this conditioning.

After beginning the occupation of Japan on 2 September 1945, SCAP circulated the *Memorandum Concerning Elimination of Japanese Government Control of the Motion Picture Industry* on 16 October 1945,[9] indicating that the cinema was imagined as a means to 'educate' and 'reorient' Japanese viewers.[10] Censors regularly instructed Japanese filmmakers in the kind of content expected of post-war cinema, requesting changes and deletions in synopses and screenplays, before censoring or completely suppressing final film prints. Trade and fan magazines were similarly restricted in their reporting on the film industry and its stars.

While a number of chapters in this volume explore how occupation creates new ways of seeing, and new ways of watching films, the censorship process in Japan from 1945 was surprisingly text- and discourse-based, rather than concerned with visuality as such. The Motion Picture Division of the Civil Information and Education Section (hereafter 'CIE') checked synopses, screenplays and filming plans, while the Civil Censorship Detachment (hereafter 'CCD') examined prints, before approving or suppressing a film. Filmmaker Iwasaki Akira, who was forced to work closely with CIE and CCD personnel in the early years of the occupation, noted bitterly the importance of written materials in the attempt to secure permission to start production on a new film. While Iwasaki recalled that the occupation personnel 'were convinced that cinema was a most important instrument for effecting the necessary changes to make Japan a peaceful and democratic nation',[11] he was sceptical about the development of this tool. Early written scenarios were examined by David Conde, head of the Motion Picture and Theatrical branch of the CIE until July 1946, who had no knowledge of the Japanese language.[12] He was assisted by a number of Japanese American officers, who Iwasaki alleges had 'less than perfect command of Japanese'.[13] In this respect, the early

stages of occupation film production had more to do with writing, translation and imagination than they did with seeing.

At the same time, however, SCAP produced both written and filmed guides instructing viewers on *how* to watch (censored) films. In this respect, SCAP attempted to shape not only the film text but also the viewer's predicted response. A series of educational films produced by SCAP and the CIE demonstrated how this was to be done. A short educational film entitled *New Eyes, New Ears* (SCAP 1951), comprised of live action and animated sequences, identified children as a particular target demographic for educational screenings. Focusing on the activities of the 'audio-visual officer', the film shows two young men borrowing CIE-approved films from a local library, and being shown an instructional film-within-a-film on how to manage the screening. A seven-step plan for a successful screening included the following recommendations: preparing pre-selected viewers to drive the discussion session after the screening; explaining the reasons for showing the film; and advice to 'encourage the bashful to speak'.[14] In this case, the 'bashful' audience member is animated as a blushing young woman. In addition to the emphasis on women and children as the target demographic for re-education through film screenings, we must also note that SCAP and CIE mandates focused on writing and talking about film over developing new ways of seeing.

Hiroshi Kitamura writes of the Japanese cinema as 'a "contact zone" that reflected the uneven power dynamic of the occupation'.[15] SCAP's censorship practice was similar in many ways to that of the wartime government; violent or sexualized imagery was banned under both systems, and while SCAP's insistence on the inclusion of kissing scenes was a direct counter-measure to the ban on displays of physical intimacy issued by Japan's wartime government,[16] it reflected that same government's insistence on the inclusion of ideologically significant imagery with the aim of engendering a change in social attitudes. SCAP also encouraged the studios to self-censor, forming the Motion Picture Producers Association (Eiga Seisakusha Rengōkai) on 5 November 1945, renamed the Japanese Association of Filmmakers (Nihon Eiga Seisaku Renmei) on 1 March 1947, and colloquially abbreviated to 'Eiren'. Isolde Standish argues that the 'oligopolistic practices' of the major studios were 're-affirmed and re-enforced by the occupation reforms' in the 1950s in this way.[17]

There was significant popular demand for film products, as audiences in newly defeated Japan embraced the cinema as a means of escape from the harsh reality of the poverty and uncertainty of the early occupation years. The popularity of film grew rapidly from 1945, culminating in a peak admissions rate of 1.13 billion viewers in 1958.[18] In interviews, many viewers recall the era as one 'without many entertainments'[19] and the cinema is remembered as the major attraction for young children in particular, in comparison to radio broadcasts and reading materials.

Cinema production rates increased rapidly year on year during the occupation, as did film imports. SCAP controlled the import of foreign films to Japan, with a heavy bias for Hollywood productions, according to the 'one-distributor-per-country rule' announced in December 1946.[20] In 1946, thirty-nine American films, five foreign films of non-American origin (all imported before the war) and sixty-seven Japanese films were screened in cinemas. The Central Motion Pictures Exchange (CMPE) was

inaugurated in May 1947 as a private enterprise to import and distribute Hollywood films. By 1950 foreign imports had risen to 185, 133 of which were American. A new quota system was introduced in the same year to cap foreign imports based on the number of films from a particular country shown over the previous ten years. Just as SCAP censorship of Japanese-made films mirrored the Japanese wartime government's own censorship practices in many ways, the use of imported American-made films for 'attracting hearts and minds' during the occupation of Japan similarly echoes the earlier use of Japanese films and co-production films in Japan's colonies as pro-imperial propaganda.[21] After the control of foreign film importation was given over to the Japanese government in 1951, the percentage of foreign films released in Japan declined from 52.7 per cent to 40.7 per cent between 1951 and 1952.[22] Audience attendance was calculated at 733 million (rounded to the nearest million) in 1946, increasing by 3.2 per cent in 1947, 1.7 per cent in 1948 and 3.7 per cent in 1949.[23] In this way, the cinema provided a substantial audience for SCAP's carefully crafted and censored film content.

Reforming occupied Japan, women and children first

Censored media content was largely focused on communicating SCAP's key reform priorities to mass audiences. In October 1945, Supreme Commander General Douglas MacArthur included equal rights for women in five priority reforms, ranging from democratization to demilitarization. Universal suffrage, female admission to national universities and the elimination of the pre-war adultery law were ratified, and the Land Reform Law of October 1946 allowed women to inherit family property for the first time. By May 1947, support for gender equality had been included in Article 24 of the post-war Constitution, while Article 14 outlawed discrimination on the basis of sex. Furthermore, the payment of equal wages to both genders as stipulated in Japan's basic employment law, the Labor Standards Law (*Rōdō kihon-hō*), was also enacted in 1947. These measures towards gender equality were conceived as a means to democratize post-war Japan, and so censors advised filmmakers to include gender-equal characters and narratives in cinema productions.[24]

While it would be wrong to consider the Allied occupation as the beginning of gender-equality discourse in Japan, the 1947 Constitution marked a major shift in the rights available to Japanese women. Before the outbreak of war, the *Meiroku Zasshi* (Meiji Six Society Journal, 1874–5) had featured an early debate on the definition of equality between women and men,[25] and activists such as Kishida Toshiko and Fukuda Hideko practised public speech making (*enzetsu*) in the early Meiji period.[26] After the government restricted women's political activities, journals such as *Fujin no Tomo* (Ladies' Companion) (1906–), *Seitō* (Blue-stocking) (1911–16) and *Fujin Kōron* (Ladies' Public Debate) (1916–) continued to present women's views, often related to the question of gender equality. Yet women's rights were not protected. In fact, women were actively restricted by a number of pre-occupation laws, including the Civil Code of 1898, which institutionalized a patriarchal approach to family structure through the Household System (*ie seido*), and the Household Registry Law (*Kosekihō*) enacted in

1871 (effective 1872) which worked with the Civil Code to ensure a legal framework that enforced the principles of male rule.

The inclusion of provisions for gender equality in Articles 14 and 24 of the 1947 Constitution of Japan is often discussed today as the occupation forces' legacy. However, Christine de Matos argues that 'gender reform was not a priority of the architects of the Occupation, but was rather an afterthought in the wider reform program, or perhaps subsumed beneath the more amorphous labels of democratization and human rights'.[27] Historians and activists alike speculate that Japanese activists and lawmakers would have achieved universal suffrage without the intervention of SCAP, in light of the destabilization of gender roles occasioned by wartime conscription and reliance on female labour. Nonetheless, occupation personnel took an active role in translating Article 24 of the new Constitution for the film industry.

David Conde encouraged studios to present a positive image of girls and women on film, banning the production of films that 'deal with or approve the subjugation or degradation of women'.[28] Studios and scriptwriters were encouraged to produce material that depicted emancipated Japanese girls and women as aspirational, and narratives featuring female subservience were deleted from film scripts.[29] SCAP influence over film content continued until June 1949, when regulation was taken over by the Motion Picture Code of Ethics Committee (Eiga Rinri Kitei Kanri Iinkai), a self-regulating organization modelled on the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (later the MPAA).

One might assume, as the occupation authorities appear to have, that achieving gender equality, at least as it was understood in 1945, would involve participants of both sexes. Not only must men and boys learn to treat women in a more egalitarian fashion, women and girls must learn to demand fairer treatment. Occupation authorities emphasized the need for women and girls to educate themselves about what gender equality could mean for female citizens.[30] A Political Information-Education Program, prepared by the CIE in June 1948, called for all media branches to coordinate in an effort to make Japanese audiences aware of the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizens.[31] The programme advised liaising directly with Japanese film producers to persuade them to include material and themes related to the political education of the Japanese populace. In November 1948, the programme was developed into a 158-page book entitled *Information Programs*, designed as reference material for all CIE officers.[32] Yuka Tsuchiya notes an emphasis on gender in this material in line with the CIE proposal for 'instituting gender democracy',[33] which suggested that politically informed film content could complement the political education conducted through community organizations, clubs and education programmes.[34] In the early post-war era, as many Japanese citizens 'embraced the overwhelmingly popular rhetoric of democracy',[35] girls were encouraged to participate confidently in public democratic life.[36] In the field of radio, recently enfranchised Japanese women were 'encouraged to broadcast their concerns and thoughts' as the CIE 'believed radio could play a vital role in teaching and preparing women to exploit their new positions in Japanese society'.[37] Yet occupation authorities and cinema industry personnel alike appear to have largely relied on

the assumed popularity of cinema to bring female viewers to the theatre. Special measures developed for radio, such as recruiting more female content creators, were not applied in the cinema industry.

There is some indication that individual producers and distributors attempted to ensure that young women participated in post-war cinema culture. The CMPE, which managed the distribution of US films, targeted features such as a post-war remake of *Little Women* (dir. Mervyn LeRoy, 1949) explicitly at a young female audience. Promotional events included 'four-sisters contests' and inviting girls with four siblings to attend cinema screenings for free.[38] Yet young female viewers at cinema theatres remained in the minority. The Sunday Audience Survey conducted by the Six Domestic Film Company Production Materials Survey Group (Hōga Rokusha Seisaku Shiryo Chōsa Kai No Nichiyō Kankyaku Chōsa) indicates that the total female audience peaked in 1956 with a turnout of 37.4 per cent.[39] During the occupation and into its aftermath, female viewers made up less than half of the commercial film theatre audience, although they outnumbered men within the Japanese population. In 1945, the population was 47.1 per cent male and 52.9 per cent female, with 4 million more women than men; by 1950, women outnumbered men by 1 million, or 51 per cent to 49 per cent (a demographic trend that continues today).[40]

Female viewers attended the cinema in significantly lesser numbers than male viewers, particularly when we consider their over-representation in the occupation era population as a whole. This pattern is borne out by nation-wide studies of fan activities, for example, in annual surveys conducted by film magazine *Eiga no Tomo*, which registered the gender of respondents as two-thirds male.[41] Girls and young women did participate in writing to fan columns, and a number of the magazine's advertisements were for female-oriented products such as lipstick.[42] Yet editorial staff suggested that the lesser participation of women indicated the continuation of 'traditional' social norms,[43] including the muting of female voices – particularly those of the young, less independent and less well off – in the public sphere.

Given the thriving girl's magazine and *manga* industries, it seems significant that young female voices were muted in popular cinema discourse. When we compare girls' participation in popular cinema discourse with the number of young women writing to girl's lifestyle magazine *Shōjo no Tomo* (Girl's Friend), it seems clear that young female film viewers were not opting out of participation in cinema culture due to a general disinclination towards, or lack of precedent for contributing to popular culture discourse. Yet memories of the era related by viewers suggest that a number of factors prevented girls from attending the cinema in the same numbers as boys. The next section presents an account of the cinema spaces of occupation-era Japan alongside viewers' memories of how they accessed those spaces, raising key issues regarding girls' engagement with the cinema and its narratives. The ethnographic material presented below is drawn from a larger study that blends interviews with film viewers and material from a long-form questionnaire project with letters and emails on memories of cinema-going, and participant observation at several cinemas and film groups specializing in retrospective screenings of post-war films. All data has been anonymized using pseudonyms.

Going to the cinema in occupied Japan

Cinema theatres in occupied Japan were organized into three tiers: first-tier cinemas were the most expensive and showed the most recent films; second- and third-tier cinemas showed older films, often in shabbier surroundings and using older prints and equipment. These second- and third-tier theatres were cheaper and popular with children and young families. In the Kansai region, first-run 'roadshow' theatres were few: the Yasaka Kaikan in Kyoto, the ABC in Kobe and the Sennichimae in Osaka.[44] A number of cinemas had been destroyed or badly damaged by wartime bombing and fires. Yet the city of Kyoto alone had as many as sixty film theatres operating between 1947 and 1956,[45] so the choice was not limited except by the time and money available to the viewer. These factors correlate with age, gender and social class, as well as geographical location. The choices on offer ranged from the modern and well-designed film theatres advertising heating and cooling technologies, to the basic theatres located in less stylish parts of town or in the suburbs. Family trips to the film theatre involving children as young as four were generally limited to the second- and third-tier theatres, while the only questionnaire respondent whose first cinema encounter occurred in an up-market city centre cinema was also the oldest, aged nineteen on her first visit.

Attempts to improve and modernize film theatres were charted by local Kansai newspapers. These were used by individual theatres to communicate with their audiences about renovations and new rules. For example, in 1947 the Asahi Kaikan in Kyoto announced in a local newspaper that from May of the same year the 'stuffing system' (*tsumekomi shiki*) that had seen popular screenings filled to standing capacity would be replaced by a 'capacity limit, one showing' system, in which the theatre would be closed for entry after all seats were filled, and audience members would be asked to leave the theatre at the end of the film.[46] Due to audience dissatisfaction, this was replaced in the following year with a substitution system whereby a viewer leaving before the end of the screening gave up the empty seat to an arriving viewer, who could remain in the theatre for the next screening of the same film.

The Yasaka Grand introduced the first seat reservation system in Kyoto in 1947, which allowed viewers to sit together with companions, rather than wherever there was a space. In the cheaper second- and third-run cinemas, viewers were packed in with little regard to who had arrived together. First-tier cinemas disciplined the audience by requiring reservations and using seat allocation; yet at the same time, they also protected certain audience members by the same means. Second- and third-tier cinemas were certainly freer in terms of how the audience could come and go, or arrange themselves, but this very freedom could feel threatening to viewers positioned as vulnerable by age, gender, class and physical ability. Women in particular reported feeling uncomfortable and unsafe in packed theatres in their younger years. While young women from wealthy families had no difficulty accessing elite cinemas, girls from poorer backgrounds struggled to afford the safer first-tier cinemas, yet hesitated to enter the rowdy and dirty second- and third-tier theatres.

Even when explicitly encouraged to go to the cinema, young women met a number of obstacles to spending time freely there. A number of female study participants

recall being asked to bring their younger siblings to the cinema with them as a kind of incentivized babysitting. Of those who took very young children to the cinema, many recall being forced to leave the theatre, or becoming distracted from the film onscreen, by the behaviours and demands of younger siblings. A significant number of younger viewers, both male and female, recall forcing an older sister to leave the cinema theatre or miss key moments of a film, by crying, shouting or otherwise behaving in a manner requiring intervention. For example, Mr Hashimoto remembered his elder sister complaining that he caused her 'some amount of trouble' by crying in the cinema during a screening of *Shōnenki* (Boyhood) (dir. Kinoshita Keisuke, 1951).[47] Faced with the choice of babysitting at the cinema, going to a local playground or reading quietly at home, we can understand why even girls with an interest in film might prefer the quieter entertainments of magazines and novels or the freer space of the playground where noisy siblings would not cause the children to be ejected.

While elegant first-tier cinemas advertised theatre cooling techniques including enormous blocks of ice with flowers frozen inside of them, the majority of female interviewees and questionnaire respondents recalled the dirt and stench of second- and third-tier film theatres. Many noted the change in cinema culture from the occupation era to the present. An anonymous questionnaire respondent born in 1943, who began attending the cinema in 1948 at the age of five, wrote: 'In those days the film theatres weren't so beautiful. Now they look like hotels!' A significant number of female interviewees and questionnaire respondents also mentioned the unpleasant smell of the cheap seats near the toilets. Ms Yamashita, born in 1946, recalled, 'The smell was terrible!'[48] For children and younger viewers, these were the most affordable seats; however, the stench could give the movie-viewing experience a sense of sufferance, further dissuading girls from attending. Male participants did not discuss the conditions of the cinema theatres, except to note the prevalence of smoking. A number regretted that it is no longer possible to smoke, eat and drink in film theatres. Only one male respondent remembered bringing a younger child to the cinema, whereas the rest remembered being brought to the theatre by elder sisters or mothers.

Younger girls were therefore limited in their power to consume cinema narratives by several factors, including the availability and willingness of an elder relative to take them to the cinema. Boys recalled entering more freely, and often alone or with friends of the same age. Many male interviewees recalled entering the cinema without paying by claiming to have an urgent message for a friend inside the theatre.[49] In contrast, female study participants' memories of accessing the cinema as young girls in the early post-war era tend to feature warnings against visiting certain areas of town at certain times, and reminders to remain with friends or family members, prohibiting the free entry enjoyed by their male peers. Going to the cinema alone with a boy could make a girl vulnerable to criticism from other girls as well as adult family members and teachers.[50] While occupation personnel identified the cinema as a key tool for the re-education of the Japanese populace, in particular younger citizens, girls did not generally enjoy easy access to the cinema theatre. A significant imbalance in the gender of the post-war cinema audience, as well as differing ideals of acceptable cinema-going behaviours for young men and women, raises questions about the efficacy of using the cinema to empower girls.

Getting 'inside of the Japanese head': Films and their interpretation

Even when girls and young women could access the cinema, the reception of film content designed to empower young female viewers was not consistent with the re-education processes imagined by SCAP. Narratives that centred on female heroines taking their destinies into their own hands proliferated on the Japanese screen during the occupation, both in Japanese film productions and in a large number of imported American and European films. Many imports specifically targeted young viewers, as schoolchildren were imagined as a new generation with fewer ties to wartime ideologies, and greater potential to become ideal post-war democratic capitalist citizens. Humanist narratives about schoolchildren, educational documentary films and animated films were aimed at this demographic. Yet the narratives and imagery shaped by the occupiers did not always translate for the occupied as desired or planned.

For example, Ms Yamashita (born 1946) and Ms Otsuka (born 1943) recalled their memories of Disney's *Cinderella* (dir. Clyde Geronimi, Hamilton Luske and Wilfred Jackson, 1950), which premiered in Japan on 7 March 1952, as less than favourable. The two visited the cinema separately to see the film, aged six and nine respectively. Both recalled a negative initial response to the film, which they actively enhanced during our conversation by mocking the narrative and its characters, encouraging each other in escalating their attacks on the film and its perceived morals. In this respect the recollections analysed below must be understood as living memories rather than objective record.

In theory, *Cinderella* was the ideal romantic fable for the era, complying with a number of occupation reform goals. After the passing of the 1947 Constitution, women could inherit property and petition for divorce, reforms which challenged the dominance of the old interdependent family system. The protagonist's refusal to follow the wishes of her evil stepmother and elder siblings demonstrates the independent thinking that occupation reforms sought to implement in the younger generations of post-war Japan. Cinderella's insistence on marrying for romantic love against her family's wishes similarly reflects the new social climate in which women were encouraged to forgo the old system of arranged marriage, or to exercise their right of refusal and choose their spouses for themselves. Simultaneously, co-education was introduced and the compulsory schooling term was extended to nine years. Women were encouraged to obtain some tertiary education and to work before marriage, bringing Japan's urban female population out of the home for longer than had previously been customary. In these key social developments, the likelihood of women and girls meeting their prince was significantly increased compared to the gendered segregation enforced within the middle and upper classes during wartime.

These aspects of the Cinderella story have been used to sell any number of products and services in Japan since 1952. Laura Miller notes the propensity of the title's use in other films, television shows and novels, arguing that 'Cinderella is used to denote individual agency to overcome obstacles or to achieve one's dreams'.[51] This is certainly borne out by responses collected by Wakakuwa Midori, who asked her female students to write essays about what Cinderella meant to them.[52] 'For many of the women, the

story of Cinderella represents the belief that one should seek one's cherished desires for the future. One student wrote that "'I think it is a story about really holding onto a dream'".[53] Cinderella as a model of a very American-style independence and agency still carries currency in Japan today. Yet for some young viewers at the end of the occupation in 1952, she was too much too soon.

Ms Yamashita and Ms Otsuka remember understanding Cinderella as a 'selfish' (*wagamama*) heroine making a silly fuss about a party. They questioned her choice to prioritize independence and romance over family, asking, 'Why couldn't she just stay at home?'[54] Cinderella's insistence that all single women had been invited to the ball was supposed to represent democratic reasoning, while her subsequent romance with Prince Charming emphasized young women's rights to the independent pursuit of romantic love, protected by the new Constitution. Yet Ms Yamashita and Ms Otsuka recalled their impressions of the heroine as needlessly forceful and dramatic, and joked that such passionate defence of one's independence and romantic happiness was read very differently in Japan than they imagined it would be in the United States. Young Japanese female viewers of romance and emancipation narratives were not the passive, compliant audiences posited by SCAP's censorship process, but rather were actively engaged and critical.

At the same time, however, Miller's account of the many afterlives of Cinderella in Japanese popular culture opens up the possibility that the film may have influenced Ms Yamashita and Ms Otsuka in other ways. Miller observes that the Japanese beauty and fitness industries have adopted the Cinderella icon, citing Takano Yuri's diet and fitness manual 'Five Points for Making a Cinderella Body'.[55] Despite rejecting Cinderella as a model for family relations and romantic partnership, Yamashita san is among many participants in the research project who continues to adhere to beauty and fitness principles in her later years. At age seventy-two, she hired a personal trainer to help her 'get back my waist', recalling Miller's observation that beauty regimes and contests using the Cinderella name are not restricted to the young. 'In the precincts of the salon, any woman, no matter how old she is, can become a Cinderella.'[56]

These specific references to physical beauty ideals suggest Cinderella as a persuasive occupation-era heroine at the visual level at least, if not at a narrative level. The character's tiny waist, emphasized by her iconic blue ballgown, recalls the beauty narratives of the occupation era, which contrasted Japanese women's physical attributes unfavourably with those of the white Anglo-European women whose images appeared in magazines, advertising and imported films (Figure 3.1). The Australian Maida Coaldrake (née Williams), who lived in Japan for seven years during the occupation and its aftermath, castigated the Japanese female figure and carriage in 1949, claiming that even while wearing 'our type of clothes', the Japanese girls that she met 'lack the finish and carriage' due to a style of walking that would 'push your stomach alternately in and out'.[57] The custom of padding the waist under the kimono to create an even cylindrical torso contrasted with the 'wasp waist' popular in Western fashions of the 1940s, and positioned Japanese beauty ideals as far removed from the Anglo-European styles becoming popular in occupation-era Japan. Ms Yamashita's fixation on a defined waist suggests that the imported beauty ideals of the era are still valued by the generation that grew up under occupation.

Figure 3.1 Still from *Cinderella* (1950). Walt Disney Picture from the Ronald Grant Archive, Cinderella (US 1950), Date: 1950. Diomedia.

Cinderella's blond, waved hair may have been slightly less achievable than a belted waist, but the permanent wave became a fixture in post-war salons, in which, as Laura Miller argues, any woman 'can become a Cinderella'. Kanako Terasawa's interviews with female fans of Hollywood cinema record women copying the hairstyle of another cinema princess, Audrey Hepburn in *Roman Holiday* (dir. William Wyler, 1953).[58] Terasawa's interviewees recall making or ordering clothing inspired by the tight waists and full skirts of imported cinema, and Cinderella's flowing ballgown was certainly aspirational in a period of scarcity and restriction. The visual representation of such pro-democracy (and pro-romance) heroines influenced beauty ideals, whether they changed behaviours or not. Both consciously and unconsciously, girls were influenced by cinema content, but not always in the prescriptive manner imagined by occupation officials, industry personnel and advertising strategists.

Film stars as behavioural models

In addition to imported and animated films, SCAP and the studios also attempted to reach young film viewers through the stars of the post-war studio systems in Japan and overseas. A number of American, European and Japanese stars were marketed as emancipated female role models for young female viewers. As well as appearing in films with great frequency, occupation-era stars also spoke to the public through

censored trade and gossip magazines. In these publications, stars presented an image of their personal lives and opinions that was carefully designed to increase their popularity, and thereby their box office following, increasing the value of the star within the studio system. At the same time, professional commentators and everyday viewers published their own opinions about the stars in regular columns, editorials and fan sections of the popular journals. In this way, stars could be criticized or publicly shamed for performing in certain ways both on- and off-screen. This made it difficult for certain film stars to live out occupation reforms, even if they had wished to do so. Young film fans also observed the censure that certain stars received for Americanized or Westernized behaviours, and remember feeling dissuaded from practising those behaviours themselves.

For example, Hara Setsuko (1920–2015), a wartime child star whose pro-war image was rehabilitated in the early post-war era by Kurosawa Akira's humanist *Waga seishun ni kuinashi* (No Regrets for Our Youth, 1946), stood out among the popular Japanese actresses of the occupation era (Figure 3.2). While critics hailed Hara as a new type of woman, academics have considered the possibility that she may have been one of the first queer stars of the Japanese cinema.[59] Viewers' opinions about Hara were divided. While some considered her appearance, star persona and career to epitomize modern cosmopolitan femininity, others recorded distinctly ambivalent responses to her independent public persona.[60] Yet even young female viewers who considered Hara a successful modern woman struggled to see her as a practical role model. One female interviewee born in 1943, who began attending the cinema in 1949, articulated this difficulty in these terms:

> Hara Setsuko was so beautiful, and she had so many male fans. I thought she certainly wasn't like other girls […] But I always felt, how would you put it, she was a bit above everything. Maybe there were people like that in real life, you know, well, kind of closing their hearts (*kokoro ni shimatte*) and living out their whole lives alone. I thought, 'Well, I guess there is also that kind of way to live' (*sō iu ikikata mo arun da nā to omoimashita*).[61]

That 'kind of way to live' was hard for a young woman in post-war Japan to emulate. Hara publicly chided reporters for the gossip and industry presses who quizzed her on her romantic life, insisting on her independence, which led some to brand her 'aloof' (*kokō*).[62] Hara's insistence on privacy was interpreted either as secrecy, hiding a non-heterosexual orientation, or as some speculate, covering a lifelong love for director Ozu Yasujirō, with whom she worked on some of her most famous films including the 'Noriko trilogy': *Banshun* (Late Spring, 1949), *Bakushū* (Early Summer, 1951) and *Tōkyō monogatari* (Tokyo Story, 1953). Hara retired after the director died in 1963 and became a reclusive figure in the Kamakura area outside Tokyo. While the independent Hara lived out many of the new freedoms young women had gained after the ratification of the post-war Constitution in 1947, it would nonetheless have been very difficult to live as she had, fiercely independent and without a recognized family structure. The relentless probing of the gossip and industry presses, as well as a number of unfavourable publications attacking Hara's character,[63] demonstrated

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Figure 3.2 Signed portrait of Hara Setsuko. From the author's collection.

that such an independent way of living was not yet considered socially acceptable for young women. Young female viewers such as Ms Koyama seem to have recognized this, despite the SCAP propaganda embedded in popular film texts that encouraged young women to be independent and pursue their hearts' desires.

Yet certain cultural elements of the American-led occupation of Japan found more widespread popularity across the defeated nation. In particular, Americanized fashions, hairstyles, material culture and entertainments became hugely popular. According to Ms Koyama, this could be understood as proof that the defeated citizens, particularly children, 'had no hate' for the victorious Americans.[64] Film stars who successfully modelled this 'longed for' (*akogare*) American style, symbolizing modern attitudes and luxury, became enormously popular.

Reference to and performances of mastery of Western culture was a significant aspect of Hara's appeal for many young women watching her films in the post-war years. One study participant who chose the English pseudonym 'Elizabeth' and included English language material as well as Japanese in her questionnaire response recalled copying Hara's smile in the mirror as a young girl and attempting to mimic her laugh. Elizabeth's use of an Anglophone name and selected English phrases indicates an interest in or sense of affinity with Anglo-European culture. It therefore seems fitting that Elizabeth would indicate some identification with Hara's public persona, inflected with non-Japanese characteristics. Hara was expressly associated in post-war film discourse with Westernized fashions,[65] and fans and critics often speculated that she had Russian or German ancestry. These associations were only heightened by her breakout role in the German-Japanese co-production *Atarashiki tsuchi/Die Tochter des Samurai* (The New Earth) (dir. Itami Mansaku and Arnold Fanck, 1937).

Yet while Elizabeth prized Hara's exoticism, she recalls reproducing only those behaviours understood as attractive in a highly traditional gendered sense, such as a graceful smile or laugh. She did not express any desire to copy Hara's iconoclastic approach to marriage and family. In this way, certain young female viewers embraced female stars as role models; yet, the impact of fan attractions on young viewers' aspirations could not be controlled to the degree that SCAP and the studios appear to have imagined. Subversive young female viewers latched on to Hara's Westernized appeal, contextualized by a wider history of appreciation for Anglo-European tropes in girls' culture, but rejected her anti-romantic independent lifestyle just as strongly as others rejected Cinderella's all-consuming focus on heterosexual romance.

Conclusion

The ethnographic materials analysed in this chapter suggest that, counter to the SCAP-produced discourse of cinema as a great social equalizer during the occupation, the disproportionate difficulties that girls and young women faced in entering cinemas in certain areas or at certain times, and the distractions posed by caring for others within the space of the cinema itself, impeded free consumption of cinema narratives. Despite the careful crafting of the content of post-war Japanese films to uphold democratic ideals, the occupiers appear to have given little thought to the environment in which

these films would be viewed, and how this environment might affect access or response to film content. As film narratives were often censored and produced with a young female audience in mind during the occupation, the barriers girls and young women faced in entering the cinema directly undermined attempts to transmit inspiring images and narratives of female emancipation to young female viewers.

At the beginning of this chapter, I suggested that we must distinguish non-compliance and deliberate subversion from bad planning or unfounded expectations on the part of occupation forces and bureaucratic bodies. In the study presented here, the majority of the audience for SCAP's censored cinema did not deliberately reject the cultural products imported and created by the occupation. Instead, a fundamental blindness to key elements in the structuring of post-war Japanese society doomed the exercise before it was thoroughly tested.

At the same time, however, it remains apparent that narratives and imagery crafted by occupying censors, however carefully, do not always translate as intended for viewers in occupied countries. Cultural signifiers are not uniform for the occupiers and the occupied, leading to mis-readings, re-readings and reading against the grain, both deliberate and accidental. We must also account for changes in memories of the occupation over time, as citizens with experience of the occupation readjust their recollections to fit with the contemporary socio-political concerns of our globalized world and re-narrate the experience of the occupation for younger generations. This chapter has argued that memories of cinema play a key role in this contemporary interaction.

In focusing on women's experiences of cinema-going here, I do not wish to suggest that male viewers were ignorant of the gender-equality theme present in many popular film texts, or disinclined to participate in implementing gender equality in everyday life. Rather, I have used ethnographic methods to explore some of the ways in which SCAP's already-compromised message of gender equality may have been lost in transmission to an imagined audience of newly emancipated women, expected to 'exploit their new positions in Japanese society'. The burden of social change in the direction of gender equality was often rhetorically assigned to female citizens, who were expected to demand and defend the new rights SCAP had legislated for them. In considering why female audiences may not have taken up the invitation to re-model their lives and expectations after the new social order on-screen, we must think about the many ways women came to, and engaged with, the cinema, as well as how potentially receptive groups for occupation reform may have been inadvertently shut out of the very theatres and spaces where new ways of being were shown.

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4   For example, see David Conde's 'Nihon eiga no senryō shi' (Japanese Cinema's Occupation History), published in the journal *Sekai* in 1965.
5   See Koikari's chapter in this volume.
6   Dower, '"Culture", Theory, and Practice in US-Japan Relations', 519.
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8   Ibid., 520.
9   Kyoko Hirano, *Mr Smith Goes to Tokyo* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1992), 39.
10   Hiroshi Kitamura, *Screening Enlightenment: Hollywood and the Cultural Reconstruction of Defeated Japan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 42.
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12   Ibid., 308.
13   Ibid.
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15   Kitamura, *Screening Enlightenment,* 43.
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23   Joanne Izbicki, 'Scorched Cityscapes and Silver Screens: Negotiating Defeat and Democracy through Cinema in Occupied Japan' (PhD diss., Cornell University, Ithaca NY, 1997), 46.
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