

Making Icons

Repetition and the Female Image in Japanese Cinema, 1945–1964

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Notes on the Romanization of Japanese Words

Japanese names are given in the Japanese manner of family name first, followed by given name. Where a Japanese academic publishes in English and uses the Anglophone convention of given name followed by family name, I have given their name in the same order. For the romanization of Japanese words in the text, macrons indicate long vowels, but are not given in words commonly used in English (for example, ‘Tokyo’ rather than ‘Tōkyō’).

I have used the standard English translations of the titles of the films under discussion; where a film was distributed under an alternate English title, I have cited it as ‘a.k.a.’. The Japanese film title is given in brackets at the first mention of each film, alongside the date of release in Japan.

Birth and death dates (where known) of filmmakers, actors, and artists are similarly given in brackets after their first mention in each chapter. Where the known dates are unclear, they are cited as ‘c.’.

All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction

The cinema not only traded in the mass production of the senses but also provided an aesthetic horizon for the experience of industrial mass society. (Hansen 2000b, 342)

What is the appeal of cinema, and what can that tell us about social and political change? The turbulent history of the mid-twentieth century coincided with a peak in cinematic production and consumption in many parts of the world, suggesting that the cinema may help us to understand how change is narrativized through cultural production, becoming an 'aesthetic horizon' for lived experience. The two decades of film surveyed in this book encompass record cinema attendance and film production in Japan from 1955 to 1960, as well as the subsequent decline in audiences triggered by the introduction of television. In this 'golden era' of cinema, post-war Japanese film demonstrates an extremely high incidence of repetition in narrative, characterization, and imagery, in part due to high production rates. But why did audiences return again and again to the cinema to view such highly repetitive content? I take a broad investigative approach to this question, examining the occurrence and consumption of repetitive motifs in post-war Japanese cinema from multiple angles including industry motivation, critical and audience response, the role of star personae, and analysis of narrative and imagistic motifs.

The 'icons' of the title reference the creation of stars as 'icons' in the Japanese studio system, and the construction of a particular film text or actor as 'iconic' based on widespread popularity enduring across time. The term also reflects my methodological approach, which draws on art-historical iconographic analysis to understand how viewers derive meanings from images, and the subsequent role of those images in wider patterns of meaning making in their socio-political and historical contexts. 'Icons' implies repetition of both form and content; in Gilles Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, which has greatly informed my approach to repetitive material, *icônes* refers to the concept of the copy, or repeated trope (1994, 127). Critical and fan writing in the post-war Japanese popular presses clearly connects the meanings created by such repetitive motifs to the social issues of the era, as viewers contextualize the appeal of a particular 'type' of text or star in relation to current events and popular discourses.

Of course, we must not approach historical film texts as documentary evidence of the everyday life experiences of an era. Rather, film can indicate the major topics of public discourse in a given time and place, playing on and speaking to popular anxieties or fantasies. Following the late Miriam Hansen, I approach film as a 'reflexive horizon' upon which social change in the everyday worlds of viewers is 'reflected, rejected or disavowed, transmuted or negotiated' (2000b, 342). This study evolves around a single simple question: Why are audiences drawn to repetitive motifs in the cinema? The answer is far from simple, but I believe some suggestions can be found in the role film plays in mediating meaning in the everyday world.

The everyday world of the Japanese cinema-goer in 1945 was subject to rapid change, as the nation recovered slowly from the failure of the Imperial expansionist project which had dominated the first half of Japan's twentieth century. In the wake of Japan's unconditional surrender from World War II and the Asia-Pacific War,¹ the pace and tone of socio-political change was formed by experiences of defeat and occupation, and by memories of the recent war. Popular anxieties over individual subjectivity, guilt, and war responsibility clashed with radically reimagined social and gender roles as a struggle for a coherent post-war Japanese national identity broke out in popular cultural production. In these conditions, it seems reasonable to consider the cinema an attractive means by which the viewer could process change and resituate their relation to formative concepts such as nation and self. However, Hansen's interpretation of the cinema as an aesthetic horizon where social experiences could be explored, reworked, and then accepted or rejected, raises the question: How? How can film create and become such a space, and in what ways are viewers invited to make a connection between events unfolding onscreen and those of their own lives? Throughout this study, I position cinema's intensity of sensation, or affect, as the factor that makes the situation described by Hansen possible.

The repetitive nature of post-war film content is key to the formation and intensification of affect. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari connect repetition, the refrain, and repeated phenomena to an intensification in affect, suggesting that the response to stimuli is intensified when that stimuli is repeated, creating an affect which doubles back upon itself (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 310; Guattari 1996). In the case of cinema, Ayako Saito similarly describes affect as 'always displaced, coming into being in and through the structure of repetition' (1999, 22). Guattari even links the refrain to the icon, arguing that the refrain, or repetition, of the religious icon opens up an

1. The Asia-Pacific War, also known as the Fifteen-Year War or the Sino-Japanese War and Pacific War, is variously dated from 19 September 1931 on the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, 1 July 1937 on the declaration of the second Sino-Japanese War, or 7 and 8 December 1941 with the invasion of Thailand and the bombing of Pearl Harbor. I refer to the Asia-Pacific or Fifteen-Year War as 1931–1945, as Japanese studies tend to favour these dates.

'enunciative territory for the faithful' in which they can imagine a direct communication with the saint or deity depicted (1996, 165). The refrain is a 'shifter' or 'scene changer' in Guattari's account of the encounter between religious icon and worshipper (1996, 165), and this description is strikingly similar to the way Hansen imagines the cinema, as a space in which to confront a particular force (whether a deity, saint, or the force of change itself). I want to suggest that repetition is therefore one of the modes through which Hansen's 'reflexive horizon' comes into being.

At the same time, repetitive tropes in cinema heighten the affective impact of film texts, inviting emotional investment from the viewer. Repetitive content allows audiences to become familiar with a particular scenario, or actor, and so to perceive this cinematic space as an extension of their own. Imagined relationships with an actor or character increase in intensity when the actor or character appears frequently, while repetitive narratives and imagery invite both the comforting affect of recognition and the heightened emotional responses created by premonition as to how an onscreen situation will play out. In this way, repetitive content intensifies emotional response and creates an emotional investment on the part of the viewer, and so viewers subsequently return again and again to the cinema to consume images of favourite stars, types of character, or narrative. In a cyclical pattern, repetitive content builds affective intensity, forming strong emotional bonds between viewer and star, character, or narrative trope, leading the viewer to return to the cinema regularly, and to consume cinema-related materials such as magazines and film posters. The cinema is thereby privileged as a meaningful event in the viewer's everyday life, creating the conditions in which the cinema may become a 'reflexive horizon', or space in which to work through anxieties related to social change.

My interest in the appeal of repetitive film motifs stems from my own experience as a viewer in the early stages of a research project on female representation in post-war Japanese cinema. Following David Desser's observation that the 'changing roles of women in Japanese society and the changing nature of their image in myth, religion and ideology provide a good index of Japan's cultural identity at a given moment' (Desser 1988, 108), I approached the cinema of the post-war era as a means to investigate the impact of changing roles for women on Japanese society. Viewing approximately 600 films made and distributed in Japan between 1945 and 1964, I was struck by the widespread reoccurrence of certain images and characterizations. Female representations in particular seemed to share a great deal of imagistic, character, and narrative tropes from film to film. Yet despite the repetitive nature of these tropes, they consistently engaged me as a viewer. As I became familiar with the codes pertaining to female imagery, narratives, and characterizations, I found them becoming predictable, largely because I had seen the same tropes in other films. And yet, this process of recognition was enjoyable; if anything, I enjoyed the films more as the patterns within their repetitions became clearer.

The role of the imagination, or the mind which contemplates in its multiple and fragmented states, is to draw something new from repetition, to draw difference from it. For that matter, repetition is in itself in essence imaginary, since the imagination alone here forms the ‘moment’ of the *vis repetitive* from the point of view of constitution: it makes that which it contracts appear as elements or cases of repetition. Imaginary repetition is not a false repetition which stands in for the absent true repetition: true repetition takes place in imagination. (Deleuze 1994, 76, trans. Patton)

My own response sparked my interest in the responses of contemporary viewers of the post-war era. However, I remain aware that my initial identification of areas of repetition in the corpus under study here is fundamentally my own perception or imagination. As Deleuze indicates, imaginary repetition is nonetheless ‘true’ repetition: the imagination always plays a key role in the perception of repeated content. Nonetheless, I sought out contemporary criticism and published fan letters, looking for personal responses and observations from film critics and viewers which suggested that other viewers experienced the content of post-war Japanese cinema as highly repetitive. I focused particularly on areas identified by viewers as ‘types’, ‘tropes’, or ‘stereotypes’, categorizing repetitive images according to the terms used by writers and fans themselves; the ‘mother film’ (*hahamono*) repeats variations on the mother image, for example, while the schoolgirl trope is named after fan and critical discourse on *shōjo* and ‘sailor-suited girls’ (*sērā fu no shōjo*) (Imamura 1948, 23; *Eiga Goraku* 1948, 38), referring to the iconic school uniform reminiscent of a sailor suit. The following chapters are each dedicated to a ‘type’ of female character or image understood from contemporary critical and fan responses and from my own viewing to be repeated extensively throughout the two decades of this study.

The texts that I have selected for close analyses are among the highest grossing films of the period, suggesting that they were popular with audiences. Popularity indicates another reason for high incidences of repetition, as studios strove to guarantee a return on the cost of production by reproducing motifs that had been well received by viewers previously. This process demonstrates a direct communication between films and their consumers, as positive viewer response led to the production of similar content. The critical reception of these films also suggests that many spoke to their consumers with a particular intensity; I use contemporary writing on affect to theorize this intense communication between repetitive film tropes and their audiences.

Affect and the Spectator

‘Affect’ is popularly and academically used to refer to a particular intensity of experience of sensory phenomena, drawn from Baruch Spinoza’s *Ethics* (1677). While feelings are an individual’s personal response to stimuli, and emotions the visible public

form of those feelings, affects are prepersonal, in that the degree of intensity of an affect is rarely captured by descriptive language. Affect in the cinema is contingent on sensory factors such as sight and sound as well as on filmic narrative, characterization, and star persona. These components are designed to provoke strong affect, conscious or unconscious reactions and responses. Our responses are influenced by social conditioning, often termed 'cultural coding' in the study of visual media, which creates links between objects and emotional response.

Archival research uncovers such emotional responses in the popular film magazines of the early post-war period as writers regularly refer to the affect of particular stars, images, or narratives (Kitagawa 1946, 46; Kimura 1949, 34; *Kinema Junpō* 1947, 21), and film's capacity to 'give comfort to the viewer's heart' (*kankyaku no kokoro o sukui ni narō*) (Akiyama 1968, 64). The formal grammar of narrative cinema is geared towards the production of affect, exemplified by the close-up, which is used to create a feeling of closeness between the protagonist and the viewer (Deleuze 1986, 103). An iconographic approach to the study of cinema, which focuses on the connections between the material phenomena of a film and the meanings that the viewer derives from these phenomena, is therefore in many ways a study of affect. The process of deriving meaning or feeling from a sensory perception of an object, sound, colour, or movement which iconographic analysis seeks to reveal is essentially the process of being 'affected'. Recent writing on affect has tended to focus on its 'unrepresentable' aspect; in the context of post-defeat Japanese cinema, troubling emotions and feelings often described as unrepresentable, including traumatic memories of the recent war or fear of an unknown future, can be expressed and mediated by the particular intensity or affect of repetitive motifs.

In investigating the affect of repetitive filmic imagery in post-defeat Japan, I aim towards a theory of affective identification that allows us to understand how mainstream narrative cinema found a popular audience base for highly repetitive content. It is also striking that between 1945 and 1964, many of the repetitive motifs of popular Japanese cinema centred around subjects we might consider unappealing or traumatic for post-war audiences, including wartime suffering, occupation, war responsibility, and guilt. While repetitive content might be considered boring for audiences, the popular appeal of motifs that invite viewers to consider their nation's recent defeat is even less immediately evident. Affect theory suggests that the intense sensations and emotions aroused by repetitive imagery may provide a motive for viewers, as repetitive tropes allow a film text to tap into a pre-established emotive narrative, image, or character to invoke viewer affect directly, and to a certain extent predictably (an important issue for film makers in the period of declining cinema attendance). In order to understand how this experience of intensity sits alongside everyday concerns including the shame of defeat and fear for the nation's future, we must think about the mechanics of viewership a little more deeply.

Ella Shohat and Robert Stam argue for 'multiple registers' of spectatorship, understanding the spectator as a 'schizophrenic' hybrid of the following motivations.

1. The spectator as fashioned by the text itself (through focalization, point-of-view construction, narrative structuring, *mise-en-scène*); 2. The spectator as fashioned by the (diverse and evolving) technical apparatuses (movie theatre, domestic VCR); 3. The spectator as fashioned by the institutional contexts of spectatorship (social rite of movie-going, classroom analysis, *cinématique*); 4. The spectator as constituted by ambient discourses and ideologies; and 5. The actual spectator as embodied; raced, gendered, and historically situated. (Shohat and Stam 1994, 350)

While we must consider themes which deal with the recent war and occupation-led social change as potentially traumatic to the viewing subject as regards point five in the context of the viewer's personal embodied experience as a defeated and occupied, racialized subject, we must also acknowledge the pleasurable aspects of film-viewing for the post-war spectator, as outlined in the constitutive factors described in points one through four of Shohat and Stam's description. The power of the film text to fashion the spectator can provide a pleasurable experience where affective film style situates the viewer as a Japanese citizen with a particular cohesive understanding or memory of the war and occupation. This appeal to memory can be particularly pleasurable where retrospective content or narrative aligns with repetitive structure; Deleuze suggests there is a 'second synthesis of time' in the unconscious in which 'Eros-Mnemosyne [or the erotics of memory] posits repetition as *displacement* and *disguise*, and functions as the ground of the pleasure principle' (1994, 108, trans. Patton; italics in the original). As in point two of Shohat and Stam's description, the technical apparatus of film can fashion the viewer as the locus of a pleasurable spectatorial fascination, in which the kinetic nature of the moving image creates an 'aesthetic of attraction' (Gunning 1989, 31). Meanwhile, the 'institutional context of spectatorship' affects the viewer in a pleasurable manner in the context of post-war Japan in terms of the camaraderie experienced within the film theatres of the early post-war years. Finally, in its potential to assist in the creation of a national collective memory of war and social change, the film text appeals to the spectator constituted by the discourses and ideologies of post-war Japan, including, but not limited to, popular understanding of the Japanese populace as victims of their wartime government.

During Japan's militarization and wartime eras, collective participation, often to a highly synchronized degree, had been common not only in the cinema but also at farewell rallies for troops, in school and workplace disaster prevention exercises, and in the increasingly mechanized production of munitions and war materials. We can hypothesize that in early post-war Japan, the communal feeling of the cinema theatre may have been an element of continuity in an otherwise greatly changed world. Even the collective sadness of viewers of melodrama, or the fear or anger experienced by

viewers of highly charged narratives, could be understood as pleasurable in this collective context. It is also possible that after the censoring of public emotion during wartime (for example, the disapproval of mothers who wept as their sons left for war service), post-war cinema, though equally subject to censorship, may have provided a space to publicly display those emotions banned during wartime, including sorrow and fear. In this sense, the experience of being made to feel sad or frightened, and the license to display those feelings in the public space of the cinema theatre alongside others responding in similar fashion, may have rendered unpleasurable unspoken affects into pleasurable feelings and emotions.

The spectator, constituted by the film text itself, the experience of consuming film, and by external factors, can therefore experience pleasurable interactions with the film text that balance unpleasurable or traumatic motifs. A single 'schizophrenic' spectator can also experience contradictory responses or attitudes, as conflicting discourses and codes are presented by a single film text (Shohat and Stam 1994, 350). Elizabeth Cowie suggests that forms of identification in the cinema are extremely fluid (1984), implying that the processes of personal identification with protagonists and stars are not one-dimensional, but can occur variously and multiply in relation to a single text. Jackie Stacey similarly argues that we can see cinema, and the star personae of the studio system, as a spectrum of 'good' and 'bad' objects (1994, 230). The spectator may project the desirable qualities judged to be lacking in one's own life or person onto the 'good' object, or appreciate the 'transgressive or rebellious' aspects of the 'bad object' star, character, image, or narrative which the spectator dares not enact, or would not wish to suffer. I consider star persona as a dominant mode through which points three and four of Shohat and Stam's formula are articulated; a positive star persona, or the viewer's ability to recognize and successfully interpret a star persona according to social and cultural codes, is a site of pleasurable affect. While a star persona cultivates affective engagement with viewers in 'real life' as well as onscreen, affective identifications are produced onscreen by film style, which invites emotional investment in a film as a whole by making the audience experience a range of emotions in depth (many of which also intersect with the emotions of the characters onscreen). According to the conventions of classical narrative cinema, in which the female image is both an incitement to audience affect and the subject of her own emotional reactions, the female image 'as both *moved* and the *moving*' (Williams 1991, 4) is central to this process. As Ayako Saito cautions, the use of women's affective experiences in political and social transformations must be closely studied to avoid its future conscription for undemocratic or non-egalitarian purposes (2003, 9).

According to Deleuze and Guattari, repetition in the generic or reoccurring motif creates 'expressional value', which imbues the repeated motif with heightened affect (Deleuze and Guattari 2003, 327). Affect is produced and emphasized by repetition;

while repetition contributes greatly to the development of readable codes, pleasurable for the film viewer who can derive a positive sense of belonging from their ability to interpret codified imagery, narrative, or star persona, many of the repetitive motifs of post-war Japanese cinema dealt with difficult, even unpleasurable themes including the impact and memory of Japan's recent wars. The question becomes: Is all affect pleasurable in its very nature, is the experience of 'being-made-to-feel' pleasurable in and of itself? Or do the repetitive motifs that meet popular acceptance play on contemporary social and historical circumstances to render affective response productive? Affect in the cinema presents a means to work through issues, hypothesize futures, and allow the affected consciousness not only to make sense, or meaning, of contemporary circumstances, but also to imaginatively inhabit potential futures, or even pasts. Stacey argues for the cinema as a physical and emotional 'potential space' where 'the potential self is recognized in another and possibly then, in part, incorporated into the self' (1994, 236). I suggest that this is true not only for selves but for worlds, both past and future; the potential past, or the past remembered in a certain light or reworked in more favourable terms, is recognized in post-war films dealing with wartime experience and incorporated into the viewer's memory of that period. This may explain the popularity of repetitive themes relating to war, defeat, and occupation, as viewers processed the more traumatic aspects of the post-defeat era through the affect generated by cinema.

Film motifs that deal with the problematic, the uncomfortable, or the traumatic can 'work through' historical and future concerns not only by reimagining the past, but also by artificially containing problematic pasts and worrying futures within the start-end format of narrative cinema. 'Working through involves repetition with significant difference—difference that may be desirable when compared to compulsive repetition' (La Capra 2001, 148). This desirable 'working through' can be achieved by the affect generated by voluntarily viewing repetitive filmic tropes. Many anxieties experienced by individuals in Japan during the first two decades of the post-war have a certain collectivity due to the dominance of discourses on trauma, war guilt, and wartime economic and physical hardship. In this sense popular cinema is a means for whole groups of individuals to work through anxieties related to collective experiences. In fact Ayako Saito goes as far as to claim that 'films have appropriated women's affective experience and performance in order to fabricate a new collective memory' (2003, 9).

The female image is a particularly affective tool for 'working through' anxieties due to widespread cultural associations of the female body with expressivity and emotion. This association positions the image of the female body as a site of 'affective-performative' experience (del Río 2008, 31). The female image is associated with both bodily and emotional expressivity, interpreted as a symbol that produces optimism and 'emotional clarity' for others (Berlant 2008a, 174). As the female body image is

often positioned as a kind of ‘affective conduit’ (del Río 2008, 197) in the economy of the visual, addressing the affective impact of repetitive imagery may begin from an analysis of reoccurring tropes in the female image in post-war Japanese cinema.

However, I am wary of presuming to read these repetitive images of the female body on behalf of an imagined post-war spectator. The Civil Information and Education Section of the offices of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces (hereafter CIE and SCAP) had in fact attempted to formulate a hypothetical ‘typical’ viewer of the period, known as ‘Moe-san’ (Mayo 1984, 303). Based on their understanding of wartime schooling and social indoctrination, the CIE attempted to predict Moe-san’s reaction to the media of the post-war period, with the intention of influencing the ideal viewer’s ‘democratization’ through this same media. While this study is not reliant on the creation of a hypothetical ‘typical’ viewer, I do hypothesize the motivations of the general post-war Japanese viewership in order to understand the affective impact of repetitive tropes in the representation of the female body on film.

My analysis of selected films is grounded in the popular presses and literature of the period, focusing on films that generated a large amount of criticism and discussion in the pages of monthly and bi-monthly journals *Eiga Geijutsu* (Film Art), *Kinema Junpō* (Cinema Report, a.k.a. The Movie Times), and *Eiga Hyōron* (Film Criticism). These films are indicative of greater public interest, as contemporary audiences not only viewed the films but also read about them in great detail. The yearly *Eiga Nenkan* (Film Yearbook) provides further evidence of the popularity of the film texts analysed here in terms of box office statistics and financial reports. The popular reception of the films selected as case studies indicates that they spoke to their viewers with a particular force or affect; criticism in the popular journals of the time supports this hypothesis, as critics explicitly articulate an intensity of response to many films and stars.

While *Eiga Geijutsu*, *Kinema Junpō*, and *Eiga Hyōron* were all relatively cheap and widely available, the tone of much of the writing and the high-art nature of many of the films reviewed suggests that the intended readership of these particular journals were educated and middle-class, largely students and cinephiles. There is a distinct bias towards the educated masculine critical response in the reviews and articles in these three publications, though research conducted by the Society of Movie Research at Chuo University and the Movie Research group of Hosei University in 1948 and 1950 respectively indicates that audiences were of equal gender distribution in the demographic which made up the largest portion of audiences, that of 16 to 30-year-olds (Sorensen 2009, 37). To extrapolate my findings within these admittedly biased articles to identify the appeal of selected post-war films for a wider audience, I balance my accounts of popular films’ reception using the monthly gossip magazines *Eiga Bunko* (Film Library), *Eiga Fan* (Film Fan), *Eiga Goraku* (Film Entertainment), and *Eiga Romansu* (Film Romance), which are directed towards a different readership,

largely female and lifestyle-focused. However, I remain aware that critical and fan responses are by no means indicative of the responses of the general film-viewing public, and so this study largely restricts itself to investigation of the appeal of the repetitive female image on film for these particular groups of viewers.

In investigating reoccurring tropes within the representation of the female body, this study engages to some extent with discourse on 'archetypes' (Barrett 1989) or 'currents' (Satō 1982) within the history of Japanese cinema. The concept of 'types' of women reoccurs in Japanese language discourse from early classics such as Sei Shōnagon's *The Pillow Book* (*Makura no Sōshi*, 1002) to the gossip pages of *Eiga Fan*, suggesting that the female image is consistently imagined as categorized according to repeated tropes. In order to avoid a *nihonjinron*² style of analysis however, these reoccurring 'types' are understood here as imagistic constructs rather than concepts of an essential Japanese nature. Following Judith Butler's articulation of the gendered body as a social construct (1990, 8), I read the female bodies of post-war Japanese film as constructs which deliberately invoke associations with earlier imagistic constructs from Japan's art and literary histories.

This study approaches film from an iconographic perspective, reading the image within its historical and political context. In this way, the 'icons' of the title connect the business of constructing star personae and attractive characterizations and imagery conducted by the film industry with viewers' process of reading a film. By constructing star personae and images, writing characters, arranging these components onscreen in particular compositions and gestures, and lighting and presenting these compositions in particular ways, filmmakers communicated at an extra-linguistic level, as well as through dialogue, narrative, and advertising. Viewers engaged with this imagery in diverse ways contingent on their positionality: from the passionate fan who read meaning from each tiny movement of a star's face based on rapt attention to their previous performances to the politically inclined intellectual who discerned references to the contemporary political situation in a particular setting or prop. Even the child or irregular viewer, with little contextual knowledge of the cinema, could make meaning from the arrangement of figures onscreen. Reading selected scenes from popular post-war film texts according to their visual composition and the semantic meanings indicated therein, I hypothesize how post-war viewers would have read and responded to those images, supported by viewer and critical responses archived in popular film magazines.

Iconographic analysis deals with the 'iconic layer' of an image, as it connects to the 'morphological layer' and the 'semantic layer' (the purely physical and the indicative, or meaning-laden layer, respectively). The physical construction of an image leads to a viewer's understanding of its meaning, whether conscious or unconscious.

2. *Nihonjinron* is a body of writing that refers to a 'theory of Japaneseness'; see Harumi Befu (2001).

As iconographic analysis deals with how particular material phenomena and their arrangement indicate meaning and feeling (clothing, props, colouring, lighting, etc.), this method is particularly suited to the investigation of repetition, as emphasis is placed on how recurring material phenomena create a 'short-cut' to semantic meaning (Wiesław 1981, 156). I extrapolate my iconographic reading of repetitive motifs in the visual imagery of post-war cinema to recurring tropes in characterization and narrative to understand how audiences made meaning and derived affect from the film texts of the post-war era.

Through iconographic analysis of the representation of women in Japanese film, we can understand how repeated tropes in the representation of women can speak to their contemporary viewers' everyday lives. I aim to understand how affective imagery appealed to a post-defeat Japanese audience, that is, an audience cognizant of the fragility and constructed nature of the Japanese nation. The Japanese nation was not the only thing 'under construction' in this era; while the cinema may have played a part in shaping the consciousness of spectators, audiences also shaped the cinema by accepting or refusing narrative, stylistic, and even technical components (Standish 2005, 14). In this way, film and film journals are bodies in dialogue with the spectator. Reoccurring tropes within Japanese film production are examples of such a dialogue, as the spectator actively engages with the same motif again and again. Repetitive tropes are created by the spectators' willingness to consume a motif repeatedly; the viewer's repeated acceptance of a filmic trope guarantees its future repetition. As Kyôko Hirano argues in relation to kissing scenes in early post-war Japanese cinema, 'If the Japanese people had not actually enjoyed them, such scenes would not have continued to appear for long on the Japanese screen' (1992, 162).

In order to win the acceptance of the viewer, a motif must be impactful or engaging. I suggest that the repetitive motif, whose reoccurrence indicates acceptance or desire on the part of the viewer, engages its audience with a particular intensity, resulting in its continued popularity. This system is cyclical in that repetitive images carry heightened affect and are therefore more desirable; their desirability ensures their repetition, heightening their affect. The affect of a film text in the golden age of cinema attendance must impact many viewers at once. As Lauren Berlant describes, affect theory is particularly attuned to the impact of stimuli on groups of people.

Since affect is about *affectus*, about being affected and affecting, and therefore about relationality and reciprocity as such, affect theory is inevitably concerned with the analysis of collective atmospheres. (Berlant 2012, 88)

Isolde Standish refers consistently to a 'collective imagination' (2011, 51), 'collective tradition' (2000, 21), and 'communal patterns of interpretation and memory' (2005, 211) in relation to post-war Japanese viewership. These terms suggest an element of group thinking, created in the post-war era by the totalizing experience of wartime

defeat and the ‘search for stability in meaning’ undertaken by many Japanese in the aftermath of war (Standish 2011, 51). Of course, film as a medium was designed to be consumed en masse as a collective theatre audience. However, Standish refers particularly to the re-creation of national memories and ideas of what it means to be Japanese in her use of ‘communal’ and ‘collective’. I draw out this theme as a key aspect of post-war film viewing using Yoshimoto Takaaki’s *Communal Fantasies* (*Kyōdōgensōron*, 1968), which connects the repetitive nature (*kurikaeshi*) of Japanese folktales and myths to collective experiences. Yoshimoto argues that ‘when people’s mental state is likely to be similar, their memories of their experiences will seem similar’ (*shinriteki jōtai to onaji da to kanji nagara, moto ni naru taiken no kioku ni dōshite mo tsunagatte yukanai*) (Yoshimoto 1968, 55–56). Japan’s worn-out population underwent collective experiences such as starvation, loss, and hardship in the immediate post-defeat years, positioning post-war Japanese cinema audiences as a group particularly likely to invest repetitive filmic tropes with something like collective affect.

For this reason, this study ends with the decline of the mass cinema audience and an upturn in Japan’s economic fortunes and national self-image. The Tokyo Olympics of 1964 also marked Japan’s accession to the OECD, and a return to the global stage as a recognized member of the group of leading nations. The games showcased Japan’s changing role in the public sphere on television, reflecting the movement of large numbers of film viewers to home-based televised viewing. Consequently, this year marked not only a shift in popular imaginaries but also in the medium through which these were negotiated.

From Emotion, through Affect, to Fantasy

Despite Roland Bathes’ identification of the cinema as a ‘festival of affect’ (1986, 345), Ayako Saito argues that between Jean Mitry’s *Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema* (1963–1965 [2009]) and Christian Metz’s *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema* (1974), ‘affect lost its place in film theory’ (1999, 90). In seeking to incorporate contemporary affect theory into the socio-political and historical contexts of post-war Japanese cinema, this study builds on Saito’s work and addresses the lack of a detailed investigation of the production and role of affect in early post-war Japanese cinema.

Thomas LaMarre notes that Japanese writers such as Edogawa Rampo and Tanizaki Jun’ichirō recognized the cinema as an affective medium; Edogawa described the cinema as a mode of bringing images closer to the viewer, both literally and sensorially.

closer and closer to spectators, such that optical distance gives way to tactile proximity . . . so close that perception gives way to a shock to the body. The cinematic close-up involves an experience of pure affect. (Edogawa trans. LaMarre 2005, 110)

Tanizaki similarly called attention to ‘the tension between affect and narrative in cinematic experience’ (trans. LaMarre 2005, 113), writing in both his fiction and non-fiction work on the stirring potential of the cinema. However, Tanizaki understood the impact of cinema on the viewer as something more than simply the creation of feeling or emotion, recognizing that ‘motion pictures offered an entirely new relation to the real and promised a transformation of received identities and the emergence of entirely new relations, a new reality’ (LaMarre 2005, 1). This kind of transformation echoes the movement occasioned by those ‘vital forces insisting beyond emotion—that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension’, which Melissa Greigg and Gregory Seigworth define as affect (2010, 1).

While contemporary affect theory has largely been concerned with Anglo-European contexts, there is a closely related body of scholarship and literature in Japanese and in English, which deals with emotion and feeling in the Japanese context. Particularly in the fields of anthropology and psychoanalysis, study of emotion has formed the backbone of *nihonjinron* discourses on ‘Japanese’ ways of being and feeling, though many such studies have been the subject of intense criticism based on their appropriation of particular feelings or emotions to demonstrate a kind of cultural uniqueness (for example, Benedict 1946; Doi 1971). Recent literary, historical, and political studies have underlined potential pitfalls of privileging accounts of emotion and feeling in the Japanese context, pointing to a historical tendency to cast ‘the East’ as emotional and feminized in contrast to a rational, masculine concept of ‘the West’ (Pernau et al. 2014; Yang 2014). This tendency is also clearly evident where early English language scholarship deals with emotion in the context of Japanese cinema. For example, Donald Richie and Joseph Anderson claim an East/West distinction in both filmmaking and viewership based on ‘the native Japanese inability to hold back emotion’ (1982, 328). For this reason, the prepersonal ‘affect’ seems the more useful term for discussing the sensations triggered by cinema.

Looking to the history of Japanese-language scholarship on affect, feeling, and emotions, translation presents an issue. While individual emotions are generally categorized and named (for example, Doi’s *amaeru*, or loving dependence), non-specific emotion words such as *kanjō* are generally translated as emotion, feeling, or sentiment. As one can be carried away by such emotions (*kanjō ni hashiru*), and *kandō* (to be moved emotionally) contains the *kanji* character for movement (*dō*), perhaps we can argue that these terms can also be translated as affect, as they contain the sense of movement and impetus outlined in Greigg and Seigworth’s definition above. *Jōdō* is also occasionally translated as affect, as is *sashihibiku*; however, *kanjō* or *kandō* occur most often in relation to film viewership across critical, fan, and literary writing. In the case of the archives under study here, whether we understand the *kanjō* and *kandō* to which film critics and fans refer as ‘emotion’ or ‘affect’ seems a matter of interpretation.

Affect is not only a question of terminology of course, but also of operation. Returning to Deleuze and Guattari's suggestion that the refrain, or repetition, is an operation that creates and intensifies affect, we find a rich seam of Japanese theoretical work examining this very issue. While many scholars of pattern and stereotype are content to categorize reoccurring trends, philosophers such as Yoshimoto Takaaki interrogate the reasons for and impacts of repetitive motifs in language and imagery. For this reason, I use Yoshimoto's *Communal Fantasies* to contextualize the affect of repetition in the Japanese cinema. Previous English-language scholarship has tended to frame the phenomenon of repetition in terms of the 'archetype' (Desser 1988, 112; Barrett 1989, 19), associated with Carl Jung's (1875–1961) definition. However, Jung's relative lack of interest in female-gendered archetypal forms and tendency to read images of the female as reflective of the male psyche has often led scholars to interpret reoccurring motifs in female characterization, imagery, and narratives in terms of a male viewer or psyche (for example, Barrett 1989, 104). For this reason, I avoid the term 'archetype' in favour of repetitive motifs, tropes, or themes.

Nonetheless, the similarities between the work of Yoshimoto and Jung are striking; both write around the nexus of repetitive motifs and the collective efforts to make sense of the world inhabited by the consumers of these motifs. While Jung's archetype is drawn from 'typical situations in life' which 'endless repetition has engraved . . . into our psychic constitution' (Jung 1980, 48, trans. Adler and Hull), Yoshimoto examines a wide range of Japanese folklore and song to suggest that repetitive content in artistic or entertainment productions increases during periods of turmoil as listeners and readers experience a more urgent need to make sense of the world around them. Repetitive motifs and patterns (*pātan*) (Yoshimoto 1968, 142) are understood as symbolic of events in everyday life, experienced as a 'collective consciousness' (*kankei ishiki*) by groups who share goals and fears related to socio-political and historical circumstance (Yoshimoto 1968, 77). Published in book form in 1968, the same year as the French edition of Gilles Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (*Différence et Répétition*), *Communal Fantasies* is in many ways the Japan-specific answer to questions of repetition and pattern making in human perception posed around the globe in the late 1960s.

Communal Fantasies was serialized in the popular journal *Bungei* from November 1966 to April 1967. It was widely available to the Japanese public, as were the films and film publications under study here. In this sense, we can read Yoshimoto's *Communal Fantasies* as a symptom of its time in the same way that film texts and journals are symptomatic of their historical period (Wada-Marciano 2008; Standish 2000). Yoshimoto refers to the era in which the work was published as a time 'when we have not quite caught sight of the postwar' (*sengo wa amari mikaketa koto wa nai*) (1968, 101), suggesting that *Communal Fantasies* is an early attempt to put post-war desires and fears into words, and to analyse their expression in popular

representations across history. Juxtaposing extracts from the folktales re-presented in Yanagita Kunio's *Tōno monogatari* (Tales from Tōno Village) with similar motifs in Japan's creation myths, contemporary literature, psychoanalysis, and recent history, *Communal Fantasies* can be read as an attempt to understand contemporary Japanese circumstances by historicizing trends in cultural production. In the comparative structure of these analyses, and in his insistence on the formative influences of socio-political and cultural contexts (*bunkaken*), Yoshimoto's mode of investigation is very like the contemporary field of cultural studies currently influencing film research. 'People exist within the cultural conditions of the time: in other words, taking historical reality as a foundational premise, we participate in personal and communal fantasies' (*Ningen wa bunka no jidaiteki jōkyō no naka de, iikaereba, rekishiteki gesonseio zentai toshite, jiko gensō to kyōdō gensō to ni sankashite yuku no de aru*) (Yoshimoto 1968, 109). Both the method and the structure of this book are inspired by *Communal Fantasies*, which analyses a single recurring trope in its historical and socio-political context in each chapter, suggesting the potential of each trope as a means for the reader, listener, or viewer to make sense of contemporary circumstances.

Yoshimoto's '*kyōdō gensō*' loosely translates to 'communal fantasy', a term he employs to suggest that certain recurring motifs are created and disseminated repetitively within the imagination of the populace. Yoshimoto argues that society itself is a fantasy, which he imagines operates on three levels: the individual level (*jiko gensō*), the conjugal or familial level (*tsui gensō*), and finally, collective fantasy (*kyōdō gensō*), a level which includes politics, religion, law, and the nation-state (Yoshimoto 1968, 17). Art, and by extension, film, are located within individual fantasy in Yoshimoto's system; however, collective fantasy incorporates both individual and conjugal fantasy to an extent, particularly where art overlaps with politics and ideas of the nation, as in the case of cinema. *Communal Fantasies* focuses particularly on the creative arts, referencing Plato's 'original ideas' which are cited by Jungians as an example of the a priori image which Jung termed the archetype. Recurring tropes and characters are read as expressions of fear, anxiety, and national concerns, though Yoshimoto argues that the pace of the spread of a particular collective fantasy may vary; city people experience different fantasies from those living in the countryside, and an intellectual sphere will develop different communal fantasies from those of the general public (*taishu*) (Yoshimoto 1968, 94). The cultural productions of the film industry, rolled out unevenly across the nation in 'roadshow' (*rōdoshō*) and second round screenings, are in this sense similar to the folktales, novels, and songs analysed by Yoshimoto.

There are a few significant points at which this study diverges from Yoshimoto's, however. Following Marx and Engels, Yoshimoto insisted that the domain of fantasy 'was independent of economic relations and could develop autonomously' (Murakami 2005, 115). In commercial film production, however, economic concerns certainly

drive the production of repetitive tropes, as studios sought to guarantee returns on large sums invested in costly productions. The literary and philosophical moment in which Yoshimoto wrote and published *Communal Fantasies* was also rife with works that revisited texts such as the *Kojiki*, *Tōno monogatari*, and the work of Yanagita Kunio to seek an essential 'Japanese' quality that would become the foundation of *nihonjinron* discourse. I aim to avoid a *nihonjinron*-style approach by maintaining awareness of key components within my research area as social constructs. In thinking of the nation, the feminine, and the body itself as socially constructed concepts, I am guided by Judith Butler's identification of 'cultural operations' (1990, 13) that regulate 'normative ideals' (1990, 16). We can see the film text and its content as such a cultural operation, which regulates normative ideals such as femininity or national identity by presenting a 'reflexive horizon' upon which the concept can be tested, reworked, and confirmed.

Yoshimoto's mode of analysis is nonetheless useful as a starting point for thinking about how repeated tropes speak to anxieties in popular discourse. Icons created by repetition mark areas of popular fixation; these icons lead back to conceptual anxieties around change when read in their socio-political, historical, and cultural contexts. For example, Yoshimoto's analysis of four folktales featuring women with long dark hair suggests that the recurring iconographic trope can be understood as a reference to wider anxieties around ethnic identity (Yoshimoto 1968, 50–52). In the four versions of the story presented, villagers go into the mountain areas and find, variously: a mysterious woman combing her long black hair, who disappears when shot; a woman with long black hair carrying a baby, who scares a local man into illness; the kidnapped daughter of a local chief, also with long black hair, whose demonic husband eats her children; and another long black haired woman who warns villagers about her husband, who also eats children. Yoshimoto suggests that on first analysis it seems the villagers are afraid of the mountains, or mountain people. However, the repetition of the long black hair trope leads him to a different conclusion. During the Kaei era (1848–1854), Westerners (*seiyōjin*) were rumoured to reside on the outskirts of the beach areas. Reports of children born with white skin and vari-coloured eyes suggest racial miscegenation was a feature in public discourse of the time. The long black hair, emphasizing a feature associated with concepts of pure Japanese racial heritage, can then be interpreted as a reference to these popular fears. Extrapolating further, Yoshimoto suggests that it is likely that even the rumours of foreigners at the coast could be a coded reference to fears of intermixing between the Yamato Japanese and the Ezo groups of northern Japan. In this way, the iconographic detail of black hair, repeated to become a common trope in folktales about mountain trips, can be read as a coded expression of socio-historical anxieties.

Yoshimoto argues that fears become 'communal fantasies' by first being experienced by a member of a group, then being coded in story form, and finally being

repeated to the point of abstraction. At this stage, the fear becomes worn out, or sublimated (1968, 42). Of course, due to occupation era censorship and reformist thinking encouraged by the Allied forces, post-war Japanese film audiences viewed not only their own communal fantasies, but also the constitutive fantasies of the occupying forces onscreen (Murakami 2005, 105). While constitutive fantasies formed the superficial layer of the post-war film text, shaping plot and dialogue, the iconographic level often contained coded information that hinted at popular fears and anxieties. These visual tropes repeat from film to film, as do selected characterizations and narratives. Reading the repetitive motifs of post-war Japanese cinema iconographically as well as at the level of narrative and plot, we can see the post-war screen as a reflexive horizon for viewer anxieties and at the same time an expression of the very coercive forces of change which caused those anxieties. The repetitive motifs of post-war Japanese film thereby presented a reflexive horizon for viewers' communal fantasies, which cathartically expressed and mediated popular anxieties, shaping and displaying a Japanese public that did not accept the occupation forces' fantasies unquestioningly or unproblematically.

For communal fantasy to filter through a social group in Yoshimoto's system, the subject of the fantasy must already have been disseminated in the local consciousness though oral transmission, and there must be a general realization or belief that one's interests and wishes are unattainable through one's own will or cooperation (Yoshimoto 1968, 86). Both conditions are met in the context of the immediate post-war era; the emperor's radio broadcast of 15 August 1945 disseminated throughout the national consciousness an awareness of Japan's defeat, while the highly visible occupation forces produced a sense of powerlessness amongst the Japanese, particularly in Tokyo where SCAP's GHQ was based. The time was ripe for the production and dissemination of images and narratives that spoke directly to post-war communal fantasies and anxieties. While affect theory suggests the attraction of repetitive motifs for post-war film viewers, and Miriam Hansen's work provides an account of how film audiences can make meaning from their daily experiences through cinema, *Communal Fantasies* indicates some of the ways in which meaning is made social.

Communal Fantasies: Making Meaning and Memory through Film

Perception takes place not simply in a phenomenological present but in an engagement with individual and cultural memory. (Marks 2000, 147)

While it may be true that a dominant cultural memory for Japan's wartime period has not yet been developed (Seaton 2007, 35), much post-war narrative cinema has been concerned with finding or creating such a memory. This cinematic drive suggests the possibility or hope that a collective memory upon which a populace could agree, and in which a collective can find national pride, can be created and maintained through

popular culture. Such memories are constructed ‘using the public language and meanings of our culture’ (Thomson 1994, 8), language such as the visual vernacular of the cinema. However, the construction of collective memory is not unproblematic; Philip Seaton argues that war memories can become particularly confrontational ‘as groups struggle to turn their disparate versions of the past into the dominant cultural memory’ (2007, 15). The socio-political and historical contexts presented as background for the images, characterizations, and narratives analysed in the following chapters are offered with this in mind; that memories differ and are fluid, and that the accepted collective memory of an event often has little relation to events as they may have transpired. Post-war Japanese cinema presents a horizon for ‘the national production of collective screen memories—memories of an unbearable affect that gets distorted into taking shape as memories of events that didn’t quite happen that or any other way’ (Berlant 2012, 76). These memories can be understood as collective fantasies in Yoshimoto Takaaki’s terms; events whose relation to history is unproven at best, that nonetheless capture popular imagination to the extent that they are repeated throughout material culture (Yoshimoto 1968, 120).

The historical and socio-political context of the end of Japan’s war in 1945 and the events that followed are therefore central to any investigation into repetition in post-war Japanese cinema. Scholars such as Isolde Standish (2005) and Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano (2012) have challenged the historical interpretation of 1945 as a total break in the Japanese historical trajectory, arguing that many aspects of the Japanese social structure not only survived the Allied occupation, but were strengthened by SCAP policy. As we can see in the next chapter, this was certainly true of both film censorship and the studio system, which continued along the lines of wartime and pre-war practice, supported by SCAP and the CIE. In thinking of repetitive motifs in the cinema as a means of coming to terms with rapid change, I am not arguing against scholarship that highlights elements of similarity between pre-war, wartime, and post-war Japan; in fact, understanding post-war issues as continuous with, and often contingent on, wartime and pre-war contexts is key to any examination of the era. There was, however, a dominant rhetoric of total change in the early years after 1945, from SCAP memos outlining the ‘democratization’ of Japan in terms of a complete dismantling and rebuilding of the nation, to Imperial and parliamentary proclamations of radical change, such as the emperor’s ‘Human-Being Declaration’ (*Ningen Sengen*). This rhetoric is echoed in the language of film critics and fans in the popular print media of the period, which repeatedly refers to ‘rebuilding’ (*kensetsu*) (Uehara 1947, 41) and ‘recovery’ (*kaifuku*) (Kitagawa 1946, 46). While film texts and critical materials of the late 1950s and 1960s question the lack of change in post-war Japan relative to early post-war expectations, a clear rhetoric of total change existed in popular discourse in the first years of the occupation. This study is concerned with

the processing of anxieties related to rapid change through repetitive filmic motifs, rather than the actual pace or manifestation of change.

Nonetheless, there were some basic events during wartime and the early post-defeat era which must be understood as novel, unexpected, or unprecedented, among them exposure to atomic weaponry, defeat, and occupation. Japan had never been occupied until 1945, and whether believable or not, wartime rhetoric had focused firmly on the impossibility of defeat and the unacceptability of surrender. In light of this dominant discourse, we can interpret the events of 1945 as a series of unforeseen or unexpected historical episodes at a popular level. Here the capacity of popular cinema to disseminate a cohesive account of an event to a large group of people positions film as a particularly relevant medium for managing the affect of the unexpected. The experience of defeat and occupation was 'genre-breaking' in the context of Imperial Japanese propaganda, which had declared defeat 'unimaginable' (High 2003, 502). Such a genre-breaking event engenders attempts to 'turn history into "symbolic event" in a way that protects the (affective) fantasy of the nation as a powerful anchor' (Berlant 2012, 73). The repetitive imagery of post-war cinema presented a mode of re-imagining history in this way.

Without the anchor of a coherent fantasy of the nation, Japanese identity became questionable. Soldiers in prisoner-of-war camps across China and Siberia saw the Imperial understanding of the Japanese as a superior race shattered by defeat. Repatriated soldiers returned to a nation that had been 'manned' by women in their absence, triggering anxieties around masculinity and future roles for men (Slaymaker 2004, 14). Redress of power between the genders continued during the occupation, as many men found themselves unemployed and unable to provide for their families, while the Japanese-language staff of SCAP's offices largely consisted of female Japanese employees, giving women greater access to the centres of power in the offices of the Allied forces' headquarters. Such crises of Japanese masculine identity also had negative impact on women, as concepts of crisis often displace fear onto marginal groups, 'who then bear the brunt of the more general fear of things coming undone' (Gluck 1995, 42). This fear shaped representations of women in post-war Japanese film, which became increasingly repetitive, familiar, and thereby reassuring for the viewer fearful of rapid or total change.

The reuse of imagery, characterization, and narratives from Japan's popular cultural history creates a sense of nostalgia for the viewer, carrying connotations of the historically privileged in the situation of selected events within elegiac memory. National history in and as memory speaks directly to questions of identity within the Japanese cinema, an identity understood as contingent on history, whether as a continuous factor or as a point of rebellion or departure. Reoccurring images within Japan's post-war cinema imply awareness of and affective dependence on history and

tradition on the part of the viewer; in this way, the cinema is used to create the self-image of the viewer as an individual with his or her own meaningful life.

This period of change is often understood in relation to its 'post-war' status, although it is difficult to draw definitive temporal boundaries around its affects. The term 'post-war' casts a long shadow in Japanese and English discourse on the period alike. Though the San Francisco Treaty declared Japan autonomous in 1951, and Allied forces officially withdrew from Japan in 1952, the spectre of the post-war remained. The Economic White Paper of 1956 declared an early end to the post-war period, while in the popular journal *Bungei Shunjū* in February of the same year, Nakano Yoshio argued that 'it is no longer the postwar' (*mō haya 'sengo' de wa nai*) (Nakano 1984, 56). For students demonstrating against the renewal of the Japan-America Security Treaty (*Anpo*) in 1960, however, the continued presence of American troops in Okinawa kept aspects of the war and Japan's compromised recovery at the forefront of public consciousness.

Filmmakers also had a persuasive case for extending the 'post-war' due to their position within the broader discursive and political pressures of the time. The proscriptions and rigorous pre- and post-production censorship imposed by the occupation forces were lifted in 1952; the previous eight years' output of film, though actively encouraged to deal explicitly with certain aspects of post-war reform such as the emancipation of women and demilitarization, had been relatively silent on the more unpalatable aspects of the post-defeat experience including anti-American feeling, negative reaction to democratic reforms, and everyday elements of occupation living such as black market trade. Discussion of such issues opened up after 1952 as a new, bleaker post-war reaction produced films that reflected a darker image of the times. Filmmakers revisited not only the occupation, but also the war itself, particularly at home and in Japan's former colonies.

Genre was heavily influenced by censorship; the increase in melodrama production during the occupation reflects not only the occupiers' focus on women and their place in the new Japan, but also the total ban on period film, or *jidaigeki*. The re-emergence of such classic *jidaigeki* texts as the *Story of the Loyal Retainers* (*Chūshingura*, 1954, 1958, 1959, 1962), or the *Miyamoto Musashi* series, which was remade twice within the post-occupation period in two multi-part series, the first (1954, 1955, 1956) by Inagaki Hiroshi (1905–1980), and the second (1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965) by Uchida Tomu (1898–1970), indicate a desire to synchronize the image of post-war Japan with its sizeable filmic and mythological history. While early post-war film tended to treat war-related issues with gravity, in the late 1950s and early 1960s filmmakers took an imaginative approach to topics such as nuclear fallout and Japan's position in the global community in the now-iconic monster genre (*kaijū eiga*), including Honda Ishirō's *Godzilla* (*Gojira*, 1954) and *Mothra* (*Mosura*, 1961)

series, and in imaginative sci-fi epics such as *Star Gorath* (Yōsei Gorasu, 1962) and *Dogora the Great Outer Space Monster* (Uchū daikaijū Dogora, 1964).

Viewed through the lens of a popular medium such as film, the 'post-war' appears longer and more complex than official discourses represent. An analysis of post-war film must include popular film made after the occupation in order to grasp an uncensored response to the full implications of Japan's wartime defeat. This is not to suggest, however, that films produced under occupation did not express the chaos of the post-war period, which surfaced in coded form. Many films succeeded in getting a great amount of subversive material past the censors, often in the form of images coded with references from Japan's history. Historical motifs provided a sense of continuity with the past, while also allowing filmmakers to code their meanings for a Japanese audience, making it a little easier to slip certain motifs past the watchful SCAP censors, who relied on translated scripts and often had little knowledge of the history of Japanese popular culture and mass entertainment.

Women in Post-war Japan

Although life changed for all Japanese citizens at the end of the war, women, and images of women, were often at the very centre of change. While reforms issued by SCAP affected everyone, a high proportion of reforms dealt specifically with women and their roles in post-war Japanese life. From 1947, Article 24 of the post-war constitution engendered reforms such as the legal emancipation of women, introduction of the vote for women, the right of women to inherit property, and the rights of women to choose their marriage partners. These reforms inevitably affected men and children as well, causing a seismic shift in post-war society at the level of everyday life. The involvement of women in politics at both local and national levels, and their disproportionate representation in movements such as anti-nuclear protests made women a highly visible and audible demographic. Reoccurring female imagery, narratives, and characterizations mapped the effects of occupation reforms on everyday life; for example, Naruse Mikio's *Summer Clouds* (*Iwashigumo*, 1958) depicts a young war widow coming to terms with post-war Japanese society. As Yae, played by Awashima Chikage (1924–2012), comes to terms with post-war change, she educates her relatives, dealing with the impact of land reform on her squabbling family, advising on the love marriages and abortion of her younger cousins, and counselling her traditional elder brother on his relationships with his many ex-wives. The post-war democratic teacher/elder sister trope of which Yae's characterization and the film's narrative are representative is repeated throughout the first two decades of post-war cinema; further, my survey of 600 popular films of the era suggests that this trope is disproportionately predominant in female characterizations and female-led

narratives. As the following chapters will detail, it seems likely that the popularity and reoccurrence of these tropes is connected to their ability to explain, interpret, or otherwise make meaning from the rapid change in post-war life for Japanese citizens.

Of course, many of the narratives onscreen during the early post-war period were based on, or entirely drawn from the life stories of Japanese citizens themselves. These stories and the tropes they engender cannot be taken at face value, however; many post-war film revisions of written texts, such as Naruse's adaptations of Hayashi Fumiko's work (c. 1903–1951),³ discount the collaboration of women in Japan's wartime past, and create a memory of women as victims in the pre-war era. Naruse's film adaptations of Hayashi's novels omit several narrative details alluding to women's complicity with the state in Japanese aggression, replacing these with scenes of female suffering (Horiguchi 2012). While I argue that an element of the appeal of post-war Japanese film lay in the potential for the viewer to read his or her own life experiences through the images and narratives onscreen, I do not wish to suggest that these experiences, particularly where memories of wartime are concerned, are necessarily historically accurate. Popular film constructs memory and nostalgia as much as it represents the world, or an idea of the world. My analysis of a diverse range of contemporary materials in the following chapters is designed to prevent a simplistic reading of film as an unproblematic representation of everyday post-war life.

Reading the Female Image: An Iconographic Approach

This book aims to diversify the study of Japanese cinema using methods borrowed from art history and cultural studies. Moving away from an auteur-focused analysis of Japanese cinema towards a wider social and historical understanding of the impact of film for viewers, fans, and critics, requires a move away from biographical, psychoanalytic, or canonical approaches to film studies. In the final part of this chapter, I hope to demonstrate the advantages of an art–historically informed iconographic approach to the study of female representation in post-war Japanese film with a brief analysis of an early example of creative elusion of censorship. Mizoguchi Kenji's *Five Women Around Utamaro* (*Utamaro o meguru gonin no onna*, 1946), screened after the first year of the occupation, demonstrates the sizeable distance between a script approved by SCAP censors and the ideological content of the finished product. Using iconographic analysis to demonstrate how *Five Women Around Utamaro*

3. Naruse Mikio adapted six of Hayashi Fumiko's written works, including *Repast* (*Meshi*, 1951), *Lightning* (*Inazuma*, 1952), *Wife* (*Tsuma*, 1953), *Late Chrysanthemums* (*Bangiku*, 1954), *Floating Clouds* (*Ukigumo*, 1955), and *A Wanderer's Notebook* (*Hōrōki*, 1962). The popularity of the preceding texts influenced the reception of the film adaptations, as is the case for many adaptations including Ichikawa Kon's adaptation of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's *The Key* (*Kagi*, 1959) and the adaptations of *Gate of Flesh* (*Nikutai no mon*, 1948; 1964) based on the successful stage play of the same name.

differed visually from its stated and scripted intentions, I wish to illustrate the value of weighting the visual construction and impact of a film against stated authorial intent and scripting.

While the title of Mizoguchi's film reflects the earlier *Five Women Around Him* (*Kare o meguru gonin no onna*, Abe Yutaka, 1927), in its choice of subject matter Mizoguchi's film alludes to a tradition within Japanese imagistic history dating back to the Edo period (1603–1868). Kitagawa Utamaro (c. 1753–1806) was one of the most famous artists of the era, a golden age of production for the popular images known as *ukiyo-e*. Women were common subjects of *ukiyo-e*, which were cheaply and widely available in the Edo period just as film tickets were in the post-war era. Utamaro himself had a reputation as a ladies' man, though dogged by scandal and tragedy, much like Mizoguchi, whose troubled history with the women of his family and love life was pulp media gossip.

Utamaro, and later, Mizoguchi, based their public personae on the idea that they had a special talent for depicting women. Utamaro popularized the concept of 'types' of women in Japanese art, publishing several series on the subject, including *Ten Types of Women's Physiognomies* (1792–1793), *Famous Beauties of Edo* (1792–1793), *Ten Learned Studies of Women* (1792–1793), *Array of Supreme Beauties of the Present Day* (1794), and his final *Ten Forms of Feminine Physiognomy* (1802). This pseudo-scientific categorization of the female form and character is reflected in the structure of Mizoguchi's 1946 film. The five women of the title are each different 'types' or motifs of characterization and visual styling; this characterization also draws from Abe's earlier film, in which a well-born daughter (*reijō*) battles with an actress, a geisha, a vamp, and a working-class girl for a single man (Fujiki 2013, 281).

The structure of five female character types revolving around Utamaro, a narrator rather than character in his own right, reflects Utamaro's own artistic use of the female image. However, the structure is also relevant to the political and historical moment in which the film was produced. In 1946, the first year of the Allied occupation of Japan, the CIE and the CCD (Civil Censorship Detachment) conducted rigorous pre- and post-production censorship on all Japanese films. Period drama (*jidaigeki*) was condemned as celebratory of the nation's feudalistic history, which SCAP believed to have contributed to Japan's wartime aggression. On the other hand, SCAP encouraged romantic love stories on film, and particularly supported women's films and films that discussed the role of women in post-war Japan. *Five Women Around Utamaro* passed the censors on this account, dealing with the lives and loves of a group of women in the mid-Edo period.

Mizoguchi's film can therefore be interpreted as a complex expression of post-defeat chaos wrapped in a familiar structure. Released on 17 December 1946, *Five Women Around Utamaro* met the Japanese viewing public during widespread debate on a controversial new Japanese Constitution. At the beginning of the occupation, SCAP

had declared that the Japanese people themselves should take the lead in writing a new constitution for the post-war. By early 1946, however, the occupying forces were losing patience. On 7 March 1946, a new constitution drafted by American officials overseen by General Douglas MacArthur and later translated into Japanese was made public. SCAP invited debate on the document in national newspapers, but ratification continued to move quickly. The post-war Constitution was adopted by the Diet on 21 August, approved by the House of Peers on 6 October, passed and proclaimed the law of the land on 3 November 1946, and came into effect on 3 May 1947. The subject of the Constitution and its contents was at the forefront of national attention for just over a year, and one of its most striking aspects was Article 24, which sought to guarantee equality of the sexes.

By October 1945, MacArthur suggested equal rights for women as one of five priority reforms to be enforced by the occupation.⁴ Universal suffrage, female admission to national universities, and the elimination of the pre-war adultery law followed, and the Land Reform Law of October 1946 allowed women to inherit equal shares of family property. At the same time, a strong female presence was building in Japanese politics, beginning with the 25 August 1945 formation of the Women's Committee on Post-war Policy (*Sengo Taisaku Fujin Iinkai*), organized by prominent feminists Ichikawa Fusae, Yamataka Shigeri, Akamatsu Tsuneko, and Kawasaki Natsu. The occupation forces moved to counter Japan's long history of licensed prostitution, abolishing the rules regulating licensed sex work on 2 February 1946. The Women's Democratic Club (*Fujin Minshu Kurabu*) was formed in March of 1946, followed by an unprecedented seventy-nine female candidates out of an overall two thousand running in the General Election held on 10 April 1946. Thirty-nine women were elected, a figure that would remain an all-time high for the whole post-war period.

At the end of 1946, in a Japan very different to that of the year before, at least from a legal perspective, viewers flocked to Mizoguchi's reimagining of the life of an Edo-period icon. *Kinema Junpō* placed *Five Women Around Utamaro* at number seven in its 'Best Ten' issue of January 1947, and it was remade in 1959 (*Utamaro o meguru gonin no onna*, Kimura Kungo), indicating its status as a predictable box office success. Mizoguchi's film sold 1,171,020 tickets across the eight largest theatres in its first week—almost double that of the other top earning films in December (*Kinema Junpō* 1947, 35). Critical reception was divided, however, with *Eiga Fan* calling the film 'effective' (*Eiga Fan* 1946, 22); *Kinema Junpō* judge Tsumura Hideo (1907–1985)

4. While 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, 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' (2007, 89). Historians and activists alike speculate that universal suffrage would have been achieved by Japanese activists and lawmakers without the intervention of SCAP, in light of the destabilization of gender roles occasioned by wartime conscription and reliance on female labour.

described the film as ‘unpleasant to watch’ (*mita toki wa fukai*) (1947, 21). Mixed reviews did not deter audiences, indicating that Mizoguchi’s film successfully engaged with its viewership.

While the chaotic structure of the film reflects the turbulent times in which it was produced, the presentation of five ‘types’ of Edo women is equally relevant to the early post-war period. As debates raged over the content of the new constitution, people were confronted with a radical revision of what the Japanese woman, and by extension, Japanese society itself, should be. Mizoguchi’s film presents five options, with each character following a story arc of successes and failures, as though presenting the viewer with a series of models of womanhood from which to choose, each with its own benefits and pitfalls. At the dawn of a new future for Japanese women, film spectators may have found potential for a ‘working through’ of possibilities in Mizoguchi’s text, which allows for both a re-memorialization of the past and a reimagining of Japan’s future. The dangerous Okita, careering through the film at the cost of other characters, is contained by her death at the end of the narrative, creating a sense of reassurance and resolution. Meanwhile, loyal Yukie is a constant symbol of virtuous womanhood, winning the sympathy of Utamaro and through his role as narrator, the sympathies of the viewers. Although Mizoguchi’s film reflects the social and legal changes of its time, it also provides reassurance for the spectator in a return to the traditional ideal in the form of the virtuous female character who wins over other characters and audiences alike.

Reading Mizoguchi’s text as conservative in this way may seem unjust given the ground-breaking nature of its sidestep around the CIE’s anti-*jidaigeki* policy and its clever hints at SCAP censorship in the subplot which sees Utamaro placed under house arrest after a print design incurs the wrath of the government.⁵ Significantly, his hands are manacled, preventing him from creating images. However, the treatment of the image of the female body, central to the narrative as well as the medium of film itself, is strikingly conservative throughout Mizoguchi’s film. Several scenes deal explicitly with the relation of woman to image, such as the scene in which Utamaro paints directly onto the courtesan Tagasode’s back. This storyline serves several purposes; the viewer would be titillated and shocked by the sight of Tagasode’s naked back after the strict morality of wartime film production and censorship, as suggested by the use of still images from this scene in advertising both the film itself and reviews of the film in popular journals. At the same time, the ethereally beautiful character of Tagasode is inscribed back into the economy of visual consumption, as her body becomes an artwork. We are reminded that the institution of sexual slavery within

5. This is an allusion to the ban on Utamaro’s illustrated biography of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (c. 1536–1598), Japan’s ‘great unifier’. Utamaro defied the shogunate’s ruling on *ukiyo-e* by naming and depicting Hideyoshi directly, and was punished severely. The illustrated biography contained a print titled ‘Hideyoshi and his five wives viewing cherry blossom at Higashiyama’ which echoes Mizoguchi’s title.

which Tagasode works depends upon reducing the human to the consumable by way of reducing the body to the image, in this case, the popular and widely consumed *ukiyo-e* image. Tagasode's back will later be tattooed with the same image, suggesting that this process is indelible.

This equation of female body and image is enforced through Mizoguchi's framing of Tagasode. The scene opens with Utamaro and his friends seated around the fire-place in one of the outer rooms; the mistress of the house introduces Tagasode's problem, explaining that the tattoo artist has become too overwhelmed by her beauty to begin his work. Utamaro rises from the table and goes to Tagasode's room, moving deeper into the teahouse as the camera tracks alongside him in profile, transmitting a sense of urgency through fast-paced tracking. Before the much-anticipated shot of Tagasode, however, Mizoguchi sets up a dummy shot of two women sitting by a lantern in an inner room, framed by the open *shōji* doors on either side of them (Figure 1).



Figure 1

A dummy shot sets up the shot of Tagasode in Figure 5, the first of a series of mirrored female images. *Five Women Around Utamaro* (*Utamaro o meguru gonin no onna*), 1946. Director: Mizoguchi Kenji, Shōchiku.

This image previews the next shot, which shows Tagasode seated at the far end of a large room, framed by two screens and lit by two candles (Figure 2). In both shots, the women are framed in such a way as to remind the viewer of a static artwork or the *ukiyo-e* of Utamaro. This framing of the female body continues throughout the scene as Utamaro approaches Tagasode and asks to touch her naked back. The two face one another, seated at the same level and occupying half of the screen each,



Figure 2

Tagasode seated. *Five Women Around Utamaro* (*Utamaro o meguru gonin no onna*), 1946. Director: Mizoguchi Kenji, Shōchiku.

implying their equality. This shot employs a soft focus, high key lighting, and much shallower depth than the extremely deep focus shots of the previous sequence, updating the close-up of the two to a Hollywood-style glamour shot. The flatness of the shot references the two-dimensional nature of the *ukiyo-e* print, foreshadowing Tagasode's fate to become an artwork herself.

Throughout their negotiation, Tagasode sinks down into a slumped position, and the excited Utamaro rises up on his knees and leans forward, reaching out to touch her shoulder. Tagasode shrinks down to the bottom left hand corner of the screen until Utamaro succeeds in both attaining consent and turning her around to face the back wall. As Utamaro rises to speak with the tattoo artist on the other side of the room, Tagasode makes no attempt to move back into the centre of the shot, leaving the space Utamaro had occupied empty and uncontested (Figure 3).

At the close of discussion, Utamaro's body has usurped Tagasode's share of the space framed by the screens in a long shot that symbolizes his usurping of her share of power by taking command of her image. The camera tracks slightly throughout in an attempt to keep the two in the centre of the shot, but Utamaro insistently pushes Tagasode down towards the bottom left of the screen in a coded struggle for control of the female image. The camera's attempt to keep Tagasode in the centre of the shot mirrors Mizoguchi's popular reputation as defender of women; however, in the end, both are defeated. Tagasode becomes a faceless canvas as she turns to the wall, away from the camera, framed first by the edges of the painted screen in front of her



Figure 3

Tagasode concedes half of the screen to the absent Utamaro. *Five Women Around Utamaro* (*Utamaro o meguru gonin no onna*), 1946. Director: Mizoguchi Kenji, Shōchiku.

(Figure 4) and then by the heads of the male onlookers, who watch the painting of her body as spectacle (Figure 5).

The image that Utamaro paints onto Tagasode's back is as significant as the way in which the painting is orchestrated and shot. Utamaro designs a large *ukiyo-e* style image of an iconic character from Japanese myth, the boy Kintoki (also known as Kintarō) being suckled by a mountain woman. The *yama-uba*, or mountain wild woman, takes up the largest part of the image painted onto Tagasode, covering most



Figure 4

Tagasode's body is framed by the edges of the screen in front of her as her back becomes Utamaro's blank canvas. *Five Women Around Utamaro* (*Utamaro o meguru gonin no onna*), 1946. Director: Mizoguchi Kenji, Shōchiku.



Figure 5

Tagasode is framed first by the edges of the screen and then by the silhouettes of the heads of onlookers. *Five Women Around Utamaro* (*Utamaro o meguru gonin no onna*), 1946. Director: Mizoguchi Kenji, Shōchiku.

of her upper back. She appears in Japanese popular myth as Kintoki's nurse, or occasionally as his mother (in this version of the tale she is banished to the mountains because of her ugly appearance). In many stories the *yama-uba* is a threatening figure with a concealed mouth under her hair and cannibalistic tendencies (Shirane 2004). While Utamaro and his circle remark on Tagasode's flawless beauty, the viewer is alerted to her 'true nature' reflected in the hidden threat within the image of the *yama-uba*, which foreshadows her duplicity and violent death.



Figure 6

Tagasode mirrors the posture of the *yama-uba* painted on her back. *Five Women Around Utamaro* (*Utamaro o meguru gonin no onna*), 1946. Director: Mizoguchi Kenji, Shōchiku.

Reinforcing a woman-nature/man-culture binary, the *yama-uba*'s relation to Kintoki, the boy with Herculean strength, is entirely ancillary. The viewer is reminded that throughout historical narratives such as the Kintoki myth, women tend to play a supporting role. This is reinforced at the end of the film, as the freeing of Utamaro's hands and the onset of a burst of creativity inspired by the recent events in the lives of the women around him quickly eclipse Okita's dramatic death scene. As Utamaro shouts, 'I want to paint!', the camera pans down to the tatami floor on which he showers leaf after leaf of *ukiyo-e* prints featuring women. The sacrifices of Tagasode and Okita as well as the bodies of the other women who have posed for him throughout the film have been tools to the end of his creative inspiration; Mizoguchi's film presents the female image as a means towards a narrative resolution that is male-focused.

In drawing a link between post-war filmic representations of the female body and representations of women from earlier periods of Japanese history, I emphasize, as Isolde Standish has done (2000, 23) that defeat and occupation did not cause Japan to be reborn anew, cut off from its pre-war and wartime history. Instead, defeat created a social and political chaos that set Japanese filmmakers rummaging through national traditions for images that were comfortingly nostalgic. These images were reworked for the post-war context, and attained great popularity in part because their historical repetition allowed the expression of popular anxieties through imagistic codes in which the audience was already well versed. High-affect images were created using repetition, and imagistic patterns from Japanese art history were employed to heighten this affect, as were the images of established stars.

Chapter Outline

The next chapter presents a brief introduction to the workings of the post-war studio system in Japan in order to demonstrate that the images, characterizations and narratives under study here are not solely the product of one studio or director, but reoccur across the wider body of Japanese film production. I situate the studio and star systems within the historical context of the post-war, indicating their political and social importance with a brief discussion of the Tōhō studio strikes of 1946–1948. I suggest that many stars incorporated aspects of the upheaval of the post-war era into their personae, with varying degrees of success.

Chapter 2 presents an analysis of the motif of the domestic woman in Japanese film, beginning with the suffering mother. Post-war films such as Kinoshita Keisuke's *Tragedy of Japan* (*Nihon no higeiki*, 1953) drew a link between the motif of the suffering mother and the generational conflicts of the post-war era. I weave a close reading of Kinoshita's film through analysis of its historical context, suggesting that critical reception of Mochizuki Yūko as the suffering mother was conditioned by the socio-political circumstances of the early post-defeat era.

As the suffering mother is often juxtaposed with the housewife character, Chapter 3 presents an analysis of Hara Setsuko's repetitions on the housewife theme in the films of Naruse Mikio and Ozu Yasujiro, contextualized by a discussion of the political movements that took the housewife as both target and participant in post-war Japan. Women's involvement in politics in the early post-defeat period, particularly those political movements opposing licensed prostitution, gave rise to a public discourse on housewife identities and aspirations. Hara Setsuko's housewife characters show a working out, and often a reworking, of the popular idea of the housewife in this context.

Discussion of generational conflict and the ambiguous position of Japanese women during the occupation era leads us to considerations of war guilt, addressed in Chapter 4. This chapter analyses the public figures of female characterizations onscreen in post-war Japanese film, beginning with the youthful characters of the filial daughter and the schoolgirl. These tropes effect a cathartic mediation of post-war trauma, in that themes of loss and victimhood presented through the youthful female image foreclose a discussion of war guilt.

Young female characterizations such as the schoolgirl encounter youthful working women such as the teacher and nurse, repeatedly positioned as supportive and guiding figures in the rebuilding of post-war Japan. Chapter 5 charts the development of this trope alongside a new type of 'modern girl' or *moga* who began to appear in the public sphere, similar in dress and attitude to the pre-war *moga*, but with a hard edged self-reliance that the earlier *moga* lacks. Ōshima Nagisa's heroines, particularly the hardened Hanako of *The Sun's Burial* (*Taiyō no hakaba*, 1960), and Imamura Shōhei's victim-heroines, such as Haruko of *Pigs and Battleships* (*Buta to gunkan*, 1961) are examples of this trend. We can see the development of this trope from the women of Mizoguchi's *Street of Shame* (*Akasen chitai*, 1956) to the B-movie *yakuza* genre's gangsters' moll, which Mihara Yōko repeatedly reincarnates in Iishi Teruo's *yakuza* series (1958–1964).

While the post-war *moga* is figured as excessive in her desires and behaviours, Chapters 6 and 7 analyse uncategorized motifs of excess including the monstrous or legendary female character. Chapter 6 outlines a theoretical approach to interpreting the affective impact of iconic heroines and villains, to posit the mythic female as an ambivalent symbol. As analyses of individual film texts in Chapter 7 demonstrate, the ambivalent nature of these tropes suggests their function as screens upon which a post-war battle over the idea of tradition is played out. The excessive body, often characterized by an excess of size, shape, or sexuality, expresses anxieties related to the irrepressible and inexpressible, the quintessentially affective. Excessive female bodily image brings us back to the starting point of this study, the hypothesis that reoccurring female tropes on film are coded to express the inexpressible, lending imagistic expression to deep-seated anxieties difficult to verbalize.

The studies of repetitive motifs in female imagery, characterization, and narrative presented here all address the role of the image of the female body in expressing and mediating anxieties during periods of social change. However, they also suggest a cinematic use of the female image as a screen for heightened emotional engagement. The image of the female body can present a recognizable and reassuring reality, or undermine the viewers' sense of security with connotations of the unknowable or the hidden. A study of Japan's unique historical context and the imagery it produces therefore has broader implications for how we discuss the female image and its affect in the formation of collective imaginaries.

Conclusion

We tell stories about what has happened to explain events and issues. We tell stories about ourselves and even without an audience we organize in our heads narratives to help interpret and impose some kind of order on the multitude of things we see and hear. (Williams 2003: 141)

This study began with the question of why audiences returned again and again to repetitive imagery, narrative, and characterization in post-war Japanese cinema. Through an investigation of repetitive tropes in female representation in this era, we can see how dominant motifs became a means to make sense of the rapidly changing socio-political climate of post-war Japan. Audiences continued to patronize the cinema not in spite of the repetitive content of many popular films, but precisely because of the heightened affect of repetitive material. The affect of repetitive motifs is created in part by repetition itself, which intensifies and naturalizes the process of making meaning from film by re-entrenching extant visual codes, effectively establishing a kind of shortcut to particular feelings, emotions, and expressions. At the same time, many of the tropes which feature repetitively across period and genre are not new developments in the post-war era, but repeat older characterizations, narratives, and imagery apparent not only in the films of the pre-war period but as far back into Japanese popular cultural history as the folk tales analysed by Yoshimoto Takaaki (1968).

Viewers appear to have been attracted to the repetitive trends of post-war cinema for the pleasurable experience of being made to feel, often in the company of others experiencing similar moving emotions. These emotions included sentiments and behaviours that had been forbidden or inexpressible during the war, such as sadness, defeat, and fear. However, repetitive motifs also have the potential to incite or tap into those murkier affects that resist linguistic definition, creating a space for viewers to recognize and indulge those fears that remained inexpressible in newly democratic post-war Japan. Such affects, once acknowledged, are organized into the satisfying conclusions common to the plot structures of classical narrative cinema. In this way film becomes both a space for viewers to explore affects inexpressible in daily life and a means to order and narrativize disruptive affects. Viewers could then return to the

outside world with the sense that previously problematic ways of thinking, being, or feeling now fit into an ordered pattern of events. This aspect of collective viewing suggests at least one reason why audiences returned again and again to post-war cinema's repetitive tropes.

While the repetitive tropes of Japanese cinema mirrored the repetitive cycles of traumatic memory, the positive affects coded within and enhanced by these repetitions presented a means to break the cycle of trauma. Filmmakers and viewers alike could work through issues related to war and defeat by creating and consuming film texts which practice 'articulating or rearticulating affect and representation in a manner that may never transcend, but may to some viable extent counteract, a re-enactment or acting out, of that disabling dissociation' (La Capra 2001, 42). In this sense, repetitive motifs are both reflective and reflexive, revealing areas of anxiety or obsession, and working through that 'disabling dissociation'. Yoshimoto Takaaki identifies the repetitive content of myth as 'reflections of human nature and thinking' used to 'see a self that one cannot ordinarily see' (1968, 189). We can see the repetitive content of post-war Japanese cinema as a similar process of reflection and productive insight.

With this study, I am ultimately seeking to further understand the enduring popularity and social impact of the cinema. This project deals explicitly with the relation of images of the female body to the popular imagination of that body in everyday life, as in Chapter 7, where cinematic representations of the post-war *panpan* or street sex worker are interwoven with contemporary popular opinions on and legal understandings of the real-life *panpan*. Investigating the impact of the image of the female body in popular media, I have suggested that viewer interpretation and internalization of the codes of female representation is more complex than previously acknowledged. In drawing attention to this complexity, I argue that the popularity of 'negative' images of women is often based on the cathartic or mediative qualities such images may have. Isolating such 'positive' qualities coded within 'negative' imagery allows us to understand the affect, and thus the appeal of abject, violent, or disturbing tropes in female representation.

I aim to contribute a nuanced understanding of the social impact of female representation in popular media to the contemporary discussion on the role of popular media in shaping the attitudes of the general public. Spectatorial attitudes such as those recorded in viewer surveys, fan letters, and in the popular press, inform film representation as a major factor in the film industry's constant aim to minimize risk. As discussed in Chapter 1, this results in the repetition of imagery, characterizations, and narratives that have been well received by previous audiences. At the same time, film's role as 'storyteller' or narrative structure which can be used to make sense of occurrences in everyday life informs viewer understanding of their socio-political contexts. Film must therefore be understood as a medium in mutually constituting

and constitutive relation to the viewer (Standish 2005, 14). In this way, film contributes to and is informed by the popular attitudes of audiences, and the representation of the female body on film affects popular understanding of that body in everyday life. It is therefore imperative that we attempt to fully understand the processes at work in presenting and consuming screen tropes.

Post-war Japan provides a test case in which popular anxieties and national agendas are exaggerated by the context of rapid social change. While contemporary Japanese film critics argued that cinema in the early post-war era could create a genuine change in viewer's attitudes (Uehara 1947, 42), given the possibilities for a schizophrenic mode of spectatorship which reads film imagery (consciously or unconsciously) both against the grain and in multiple directions, it seems more useful to think of the cinema as a means of screening the possible to change the limits of the imaginable, rather than enacting direct social change. The cinema might not provide a pure reflection of life as it was in the early post-war period in Japan, or have traceable impact on the implementation of post-war social reforms, but we may instead approach cinema as a record of the reflections, rejections, disavowals, transmutations, and negotiations involved in social change, to paraphrase Miriam Hansen.

In the current global context in which the discourse of rapid social change is increasingly ever-present in public consciousness, the use of female gendered tropes to express and mediate popular anxieties related to change has its own impact on the understanding and treatment of the female body in everyday life and at the levels of legislation and politics. If female tropes in popular media inform the limits of what we consider imaginable in regards to women in everyday life, we must attempt to understand more fully the affective impacts of female motifs on film. As Yoshimoto describes, the affective impact of entrenched iconography is contingent on a collective imagination of the world and its conditions, whether the collective is understood to extend to the global, or limited to the local or to a particular class, gender, generation, or social grouping. Communal fantasies therefore both limit and extend our imagination of the possible.

Watashitachi ga genjitsu no shikkoku kara kaihōsaretai to negau naraba, izureni-seyo kyōdō gensō kara kaihō nashi ni wa fukanō de aru.

[If it's true that we desire to be freed from the shackles of reality, in any event, it will not be possible without breaking free from communal fantasy.] (Yoshimoto 1968, 89)

Yoshimoto's theory of communal fantasy raises a pressing question: Can we create meaningful change using unchanging iconography? While the tropes of pre-war cinema and even premodern folklore were repurposed in post-war Japanese cinema to both promote and conceptually process social change, many radical changes proposed during the first two decades of the post-war era appear now to have failed to

take effect in daily life. For example, current discourse on the low levels of female representation in the Japanese government and workplace suggest that the post-war reforms that encouraged women into work in the public sphere were short lived. To what extent can we attribute this phenomenon to the recycling of older tropes in the use of cinema to promote social change in post-war Japan? Are we really doomed, as Yoshimoto seems to suggest, to repeat the patterns of everyday life while we repeat the icons we use to make sense of our experiences? And how can we 'break free' from communal fantasies when the iconography used to construct them is so affectively appealing?

Gilles Deleuze touches on this issue in *Difference and Repetition*, suggesting that while a 'conceptual blockage' (such as the kind experienced during trauma and its aftermath) may give rise to a kind of 'bare repetition' in form and content (1994, 220), imagination and habit draw a sense of the new from each repetition nonetheless (1994, 7). This suggests an aspect of the appeal of repetitive cinematic icons; arising from the conceptual blockages caused by social change, the imagined new components of each repetition are not only fascinating in themselves, but can also give a sense of the 'moving on' or 'working through' that the traumatized subject desires. However, Deleuze cautions that this imaginative process 'gathers the traces of the former present and models the new present on the old' (1994, 104). Like Yoshimoto then, he seems to be warning against the illusion that new ways of thinking or being can really be generated by repetition.

These are the questions facing film studies and cultural studies researchers as we try to imagine a way to shape a positive future using visual media. In pursuit of this goal, it is essential that we learn as we go from media's historical uses and impacts in the past. Thinking hard about how we use repetitive icons to understand the world around us, we can see how those icons in turn come to shape our understandings of the world and our patterns of thought. On the one hand, repetitive tropes can be used to rationalize and narrativize threatening or uncomfortable situations; on the other, these same motifs can delimit what we consider possible in terms of positive change. For example, as discussed in Chapter 7, the abject sex worker icon was a means for newly disenfranchised citizens to express anxieties and conceptualize the changing world of post-war Japan through film in the early post-defeat era. At the same time, the widespread repetition of the motif creates a situation in which the fictional abject sex worker is more often represented in public discourse than her real world counterpart. The experiences and subjectivities of the sex worker, who will have many other identities and roles including perhaps mother, daughter, or office worker, are flattened by the dominance of her fictionalized motif. The rich interconnectedness of female experience and identity becomes artificially separated and categorized, in part because repetitive motifs are an attractively simple means by which to understand the world. These deceptively simple categorizations not only dehumanize complex

lived experience, but also limit our understanding of human capabilities, limiting in turn our conceptions of what could be possible. In this way, the flattened repetitive sex worker trope actively inhibits our thinking on how to create a safer future for sex workers, and by extension the flattening of all lived experience into categorized motifs inhibits our ability to conceptualize a safer, fairer, and better future.

Throughout this study, I have attempted to demonstrate the positive cathartic capacities of screen icons by reading their iconographic meanings in the context of issues and anxieties facing post-war Japanese film viewers. Setting the socio-political and historical context of post-war Japan alongside each repetitive trope, it becomes clear that the abstracted motifs that express and mediate concerns about social change also limit the possibility of change itself. If the repetitive affect of screen tropes builds convenient short-cuts for creating meaning from image, do we risk blocking off alternative avenues of understanding?

I began with the question of why film viewers returned again and again to repetitive content in post-war cinema, and suggested that an answer could lie in the cathartic or positive affect of repetitive motifs, which is a major component of the cinema viewer's attraction to repetitive content. This hypothesis returns us to the age-old question of popular media: Is it good for us? Yoshimoto and Deleuze seem to suggest it is not, if we understand the repetitive tropes of post-war cinema as communal fantasies which in the end trap the viewer in a particular understanding of reality. To make meaningful change, it seems we must acknowledge not only the convenience of repetitive tropes in making sense of our world, but also the danger of these same tropes limiting what counts as 'making sense'. To have the option of freeing ourselves from 'the shackles of reality', we need to remain fully aware of how communal fantasies such as screen icons really work.

Select Filmography

A Hen in the Wind (*Kaze no naka no mendori*/風の中の牝鶏), 1948. Director: Ozu Yasujirō, Shōchiku.

A Sincere Heart a.k.a. *Sincerity* (*Magokoro*/まごころ), 1953. Director: Kobayashi Masaki, Shōchiku.

A Wanderer's Notebook (*Hōrōki*/放浪記), 1962. Director: Naruse Mikio, Takarazuka Eiga/Tōhō.

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Mother (*Haha*/母), 1963. Director: Shindō Kaneto, Kindai Eiga Kyōkai.

Mothra (*Mosura*/モスラ), 1961. Director: Honda Ishirō, Tōhō.

Mournful Whistle (*Kanashiki kuchibue*/悲しき口笛), 1949. Director: Ieki Miyoji, Shōchiku.

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Night Drum (*Yoru no tsuzume*/夜の鼓), 1958. Director: Imai Tadashi, Kindai Pro/Shōchiku.

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Onibaba (*Onibaba*/鬼婆), 1964. Director: Shindō Kaneto, Kindai Eiga Kyōkai and Tokyo Eiga Company/Tōhō.

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Osaka Elegy (*Naniwa ereji*/浪花悲歌), 1936. Director: Mizoguchi Kenji, Daiichi Eiga.

Pigs and Battleships (*Buta to gunkan*/豚と軍艦), 1961. Director: Imamura Shōhei, Nikkatsu.

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Rashomon (*Rashōmon*/羅生門), 1950. Director: Kurosawa Akira, Daiei.

Record of a Tenement Gentleman (*Nagaya shinshiroku*/長屋紳士録), 1947. Director: Ozu Yasujirō, Shōchiku.

Repast (*Meshi*/めし), 1951. Director: Naruse Mikio, Tōhō.

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Story of the Loyal Retainers (*Chūshingura*/忠臣蔵), 1954. Director: Ōsone Tatsuo, Shōchiku.

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The Human Condition Parts I and II: No Greater Love (人間の条件 第一部・純愛篇/第二部・激怒篇), 1959. Director: Kobayashi Masaki, Ninjin Club, and Kabukiza Eiga/Shōchiku.

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The Human Condition Series (*Ningen no jōken*/人間の条件), 1959–1961. Director: Kobayashi Masaki.

The Idiot (*Hakuchi*/白痴), 1951. Director: Kurosawa Akira, Shōchiku.

The Insect Woman (*Nippon konchūki*/こつぽん昆虫記), 1963. Director: Imamura Shōhei, Nikkatsu.

The Key (*Kagi*/鍵), 1959. Director: Ichikawa Kon, Daiei.

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The Legend of the White Serpent (*Byaku fujin no yōren*/Bai she chuanshuō/白婦人の妖恋/白蛇傳説), 1956. Director: Toyoda Shirō, Shaw Brothers and Tōhō.

The Love-Troth Tree (*Aizen katsura/愛染桂*), 1938. Director: Nomura Hiromasa, Shōchiku.

The New Earth (*Atarashiki tsuchi/新しき土*), 1937. Directors: Itami Mansaku and Arnold Fanck, Dr. Arnold Fanck-Film, Berlin, J. O. Studios, Nikkatsu.

The Night before the Outbreak of War (*Kaisen no zen'ya/会戦の前夜*), 1943. Director: Yoshimura Kōzaburō, Shōchiku Ōfunu.

The Plum in the Golden Vase (*Jin ping mei*), 1955. Director: Wang Yin, Shaw and Sons.

The Precipice (*Hyoheki/氷壁*), 1958. Director: Masumura Yasuzō, Daiei.

The Prodigal Son (*Onna goroshi abura jigoku/女殺し油地獄*), 1949. Director: Nobuchi Chō, Daiei.

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The Young Boss (*Hanagasa wakashu/花笠若衆*), 1958. Director: Sakei Kiyoshi, Tōei.

Tokyo Kid (*Tōkyō kiddo/東京キッド*), 1950. Director: Saito Torajiro, Shōchiku.

Tokyo Story (*Tōkyō monogatari/東京物語*), 1953. Director: Ozu Yasujirō, Shōchiku, Towa Shoji-Film.

Tragedy of Japan (*Nippon no higeki*/日本の悲劇), 1946. Director: Kamei Fumio, Independent.

Twenty-Four Eyes (*Nijūshi no hitomi*/二十四の瞳), 1954. Director: Kinoshita Keisuke, Shōchiku.

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White Line (*Shirosen himitsu chitai*/白線秘密地帯), 1958. Director: Iishi Teruo, Shin-Tōhō.

Wife (*Tsuma*/妻), 1953. Director: Naruse Mikio, Tōhō.

Woman of the Dunes (*Suna no onna*/砂の女), 1964. Director: Teshigahara Hiroshi, Chokushi Kawara Pro/Tōhō.

Woman of Tokyo (*Tōkyō no onna*/東京の女), 1933. Director: Ozu Yasujirō, Shōchiku.

Women of the Night (*Yoru no onnatachi*/夜の女たち), 1948. Director: Mizoguchi Kenji, Shōchiku.

Yellow Line (*Ōsen chitai*/横線地帯), 1960. Director: Iishi Teruo, Shin-Tōhō.

Young Folks, Don't Hesitate (*Tamerau nakare wakodo yo*/躊躇うなかれ若子どよ), 1935. Director: Taguchi Tetsu, Nikkatsu.

Youth of the Beast (*Yajū no seishun*/野獣の青春), 1963. Director: Suzuki Seijun, Nikkatsu.

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