PETS, PLAYTHINGS, PEOPLE

AMERICAN VISIONS OF JAPAN
IN THE WAKE OF WORLD WAR II

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INTRODUCTION

Out for a day in New York City, two young adults excitedly talk about the newest sushi restaurant in town while enjoying bouts of karaoke. In an American suburb, one teenager reads manga, or Japanese comics, as their parents drive them to karate practice in a Toyota or Honda. Fashionistas in Chicago eagerly await the debut of the newest clothing line from a famed Tokyo designer. Debating the merits of warm versus cold sake, a group of twenty-somethings analyze the subtle differences through bottle after bottle. Japanese culture has taken root in many corners of the American consumer landscape, at times equaling and at others eclipsing the popularity of domestic products of the same variety. Words such as “sushi,” “karaoke,” and “zen” have become common parts of the American English lexicon. This might seem surprising given the imported nature of these cultural products, so different from their closest American equivalents yet so prolific in the United States. All the more surprising, then, when one considers that in the mid-20th century (and in many corners for decades afterward), that anything Japanese was a dirty word.

World War II was a devastating conflict that engulfed the globe in bloodshed and torn nations asunder, but it was also the source of a bitter hatred for all things Japanese among the American populace. Fueled by fears of the “yellow hordes of Asia” and competition from Japanese immigrant labor, then manifested in legislation barring Japanese immigrants from entry into the U.S. and the naturalization of many residents of Japanese descent, negative and overtly racist images of the Japanese people dominated in the American media throughout the first half of the 20th century. Prior to the outbreak of war, renderings of the Japanese as monkeys or members of mindless, buck-toothed hordes proliferated. After the assault on Pearl Harbor, brutal and backstabbing gorillas were the dominant depiction of the Japanese armed forces and all Japanese civilians by extension. The Japanese were, to most Americans, the antithesis of everything they thought the United States stood for. The “prompt and
utter destruction” promised by the Potsdam Declaration, were Japan to refuse surrender, was to many Americans the only suitable punishment for America's wartime enemy. For others, that was insufficient: a December 1944 Gallup Poll showed that 13% of Americans polled favored the eradication of the Japanese as a people, through sterilization or otherwise.¹ Americans anticipated a bloody battle to the bitter end with the Japanese army, and many were prepared to eradicate the Japanese nation if necessary. Racially charged images of an inhuman enemy had made these extreme sentiments possible, and a virulent racism pervaded American battle cries against the “Jap hordes” that, to them, represented the antithesis of American values.

![Image of Action Comics](https://example.com/ActionComics58.jpg)

Source: Cover of *Action Comics*, no. 58, March 1943.

It is all the more astounding, then, that these deep-seeded hatreds and charged images were subject to the drastic transformations they underwent within weeks of the arrival of the first American occupation forces in Japan. As the two former enemies were brought face-to-face off the battle field,

many on both sides had their first encounter with enemy nationals in a civilian context. Informal and formal barriers to interactions between the two parties were erected but quickly overturned, and American soldiers and Japanese civilians engaged in a wide array of social interactions. Conqueror and conquered dined together, played together, and soon slept with and married one another.

Throughout all of this there persisted a number of old perceptions of the Japanese people in American minds and discourse which now mixed with new experiences to produce complimentary, conflicting, and increasingly complex renditions of the United States' Pacific rival. Some depictions were “confirmed,” others rapidly overturned, and still others a hybrid of new and old perceptions of the Japanese. Many Americans saw reasons to abandon their negative assessments of Japanese character; many found sought new justifications for old stereotypes and applied their imaginings of the Japanese people in new ways and to changing circumstances. Some of these died out or were transformed over the decades following the war and occupation; other persist to the present day. In every case, they underwent one form of change or another.

Contact, be it social, romantic, or sexual, altered American perceptions of Japan and resulted in images that were often grounded in prewar and wartime misconceptions but were nevertheless new. Japan would mean many things to America in the postwar period: friend and foe; pupil of democracy and hotbed of “feudalistic” ideas; valuable ally and “danger spot in the Orient.” This change had to begin somewhere, however, and the most dramatic point of departure for American perceptions of Japan are located within the years of the United States' occupation of the broken Pacific imperial power. Day-to-day interactions in Japan, American press coverage, literature, and memoirs were essential to the “affirmation” and overturning of these images among the American public. Marriages between American soldiers, often white or African-American, and Japanese war brides brought these women into American communities into which Japanese-Americans had long been denied access, fortifying the resolve of many who opposed these marriages and breaking down the resistance of many others. Americans, be they soldiers serving in Japan or readers at home in the United States, were now brought
into contact, directly or indirectly, with the Japanese populace in ways and on a scale hitherto unseen.
PART I: CONTACT
I

“The Japanese People Aren't Half Bad”: Direct Contact and American Representations of Japan

Members of the advance party of American soldiers landing at Atsugi Airfield on August 31, 1945 were largely uneasy, and understandably so. They were landing in enemy territory, in a nation with which they were still technically at war, and which still boasted over two million fresh, untested troops they had expected to fight in an invasion of the Japanese home islands. Much to the relief of American soldiers being prepared for the invasion, that battle never came; Emperor Hirohito had ordered an end to the hostilities and the laying down of arms by the Imperial Army less than two weeks before. Save for a few rogue commanders and soldiers holding out on the mainland and in the islands of the Pacific, the Japanese armed forces surrendered, and the first of the Allied forces began the peaceful invasion of the Japanese islands without a shot fired.

Still, the contingent of Japanese police and soldiers sent to greet the first American arrivals (and, ostensibly, to keep any fanatics from attacking them) did little to ease the misgivings of soldiers who had lost comrades fighting against the “yellow bastards” and “fanatical emperor worshipers,” hundreds of whom now stood in rows to greet them. Even with the cordial welcome extended them, it was difficult for many American servicemen to overcome a lingering mistrust of the people whose country they were now occupying; for though the Japanese had surrendered, many Americans feared they might rise up against the occupiers if a moment of American vulnerability should present itself. The pressure was great. Speaking for his fellow paratroopers, Elliot Chaze writes in his memoir of occupation duty: “I believe the reaction of most occupation troops in Japan is that of a person suddenly handed a brimming bedpan and told to guard its contents carefully.”

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2 The Battle of Japan was the planned invasion of the Japanese home islands if Japan were to refuse to surrender. Projected American casualties were in the hundreds of thousands.
those contents spill over there was no telling what might happen, and their task seemed all the more monumental and fraught with danger as a result.

Contact with Japanese civilians would soon dispel the deeper fears harbored by the occupiers. Instead of spear-wielding women and children, as war department films such as *Know Your Enemy–Japan* warned them to expect, American soldiers were greeted “by women who called ‘yoo hoo’ to the first troops landing on the beaches in full battle gear, and men who bowed and asked what it was the conquerors wished.”⁴ Both this supplicant attitude and encounters with Japanese women were to shape many American attitudes toward the conquered Japanese in the years to come. But for now, these were crucial factors in breaking down the initial barriers of fear and allowing the first occupiers to take their fingers off the trigger of their carbines. Norman White, a serviceman in the early months of occupation, observed this disarming quality among the conquered. “Victorious Americans in Japan come in like conquering heroes, stern-faced and guarded,” he wrote, but “at the end of the first day they put away their sidearms. On the second day they buy souvenirs […] And from then on they are tourists, neither more nor less.”⁵ The transformation of Japan from enemy territory to exotic locale in the minds of those sent to occupy it was a rapid one, an even faster transformation among soldiers on the ground than their fellow Americans at home.

That exotic land could still appear to be fraught with danger. Though most GIs could soon reconcile themselves to the fact that the Japanese were most likely not plotting some revolt for a more opportune time, befriending the former enemy proved to be an entirely different task. Speaking for American GIs being sent to occupy the Japanese islands (though not a soldier himself), a writer opined in a September 1945 issue of the *Honolulu Advertiser* that “self-respecting Americans” would not extend the moniker of “friend” to the Japanese for the foreseeable future.⁶ A December 1945 article in

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⁴ Dower, John W. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. 24.
the *Saturday Evening Post* warned that the “slippery […] bright-eyed little men” running Japanese politics must be carefully led and placed under the scrutiny of Americans stationed there, lest they be left to continue the “virtually hopeless job” of democratizing Japan on their own. They were barely deserving of trust, the writer reasoned, let alone the friendship of American soldiers. General Douglass MacArthur dismissed the possibility of fraternization between G.I.s and Japanese citizens, stating that “the general aloofness of the American soldier, based upon his innate self-respect, is one of the most noticeable characteristics of the occupation.” The American public need not fear potentially disarming friendly relations between the conquerors and conquered.

Yet fraternize they did. Despite regulations placing Japanese homes off-limits, prohibiting the consumption of Japanese food, and sharing of GI rations with the Japanese populace, all of these happened in abundance long before the dissolution of formal strictures that sought to curtail interactions between conqueror and conquered. “Fraternization may be frowned on,” admitted jounalist Seymour Nagan in the *New York Times*, “but soldiers still have to go places and do things.” He had duties to fulfill, but the more unnecessary or undesirable rules would be ignored as GIs set out to eat, drink, and be merry with many of their new charges. So much for the “aloofness” of the American soldier. GIs soon hit the streets, took weekend tours of the countryside, and began haggling with store owners for souvenirs to bring home. This adventurous spirit was spurred on by the realization of most occupation personnel that the Japanese had not only accepted their defeat, but that by mid-October of 1945 it was readily apparent that the majority of Japanese civilians bore no intent to assail occupation personnel. “Perhaps never before in history has any fighting people accepted so humbly and obediently the will of a conqueror,” wrote a flotilla commander on temporary duty in the first months of occupation. This largely peaceable acceptance would prove vital in allowing most Americans

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serving in the occupation to engage with the Japanese more readily.\(^\text{11}\)

That such interactions occurred so soon and in such numbers after the soldiers moved ashore is an interesting phenomenon in light of the bitter fighting as well as the charged rhetoric that characterized the war and prewar years. Many Japanese soldiers had been shot on sight during the fighting in the Pacific, lest they attempt to blow themselves up in a suicide attack once in American custody; it was considered better to be safe than to leave it to chance. Now, the conquerors walked among them, their men, their women, their children, with not a shot fired and both parties often totally disarmed. Moreover, the occupiers conversed with them, ate and drank with them (against early orders), and, in the penultimate reversal of earlier hatreds, courted and dated them. Such interactions would have been unexpected were rules governing non-fraternization necessary to preserving the safety of soldiers and self-regulation in observing them plausible. But it was difficult for many of the GIs to deny the evidence before them: the Japanese were not all insane killing machines. Notions of a shared humanity between conqueror and conquered registered for many occupation personnel immediately. While some enjoyed playing the role of conquering hero more than others, few could deny that they were not in the company of misguided sheep corralled into their pen at last, but of a defeated people, with thoughts, emotions, and lives all their own. For American personnel on the ground in Japan, coming into contact with something other than an enemy soldier at war and a monstrous caricature of an otherwise faceless enemy made all the difference. Some continued to hate the “little yellow bastards” and avoid interacting with Japanese civilians whenever possible. For the majority, however, either out of amusement or human sympathy fraternizing with the former foe was readily embraced and acted upon in ways that one would never imagine such recent enemies, hell bent on killing one another, might be capable of.

Adventurous GIs yearning for new horizons sought out perspective-altering experiences; some such encounters happened purely by chance. One such event was recalled by Doris Schwartz, an army

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nurse assigned to the earliest weeks of occupation duty. Following fellow occupation personnel in jumping aboard a Japanese mail train and unable to get off once it began moving, she and her companions were stuck in a car with two Japanese soldiers still bearing their rifles, clutching them all the more nervously when it was too late for the Americans to disembark. The door was closed during transit, enveloping the car in darkness, and a tense atmosphere overtook the compartment. After offering the Japanese soldiers a cigarette, which they begrudgingly accepted, one of Schwartz's companions began playing his harmonica in an attempt to break the tension. Much to the Americans’ surprise, it was soon followed by another, unidentified harmonica, and in the match light it was revealed to be one of the Japanese soldiers. The car erupted in laughter, and the two amateur musicians proceeded to put on what to the nurse was “one of the funniest amateur shows I have ever witnessed [...] With alternating rounds of music and cigarettes, we arrived quickly at the Tokyo station, where the door was opened politely and the erstwhile angry guards bowed us out with smiling good-bys.”¹² A chance encounter with a harmonica-playing Japanese soldier had been enough to dispel the fears of these Americans, and similar experiences would aid many occupation personnel in letting their guard down and overcoming their fears of the former foe.

Encounters such as Schwartz's were influential in changing the perspectives of those already serving in the occupation, but great pains were soon undertaken by the military to better prepare new soldiers for occupation duty by mitigating their more extreme views of Japan and emphasizing aspects of Japanese culture deemed positive by those who had been on the scene. Once the occupation was underway, pre-departure orientation for Japan-bound personnel was introduced to prepare GIs to share in these realizations and encourage them to actively interact with Japanese civilians. After the Army revised its first edition of the *Pocket Guide to Japan*, which admonished its readers that “you are among a hostile people who would like nothing better than to see you dead,”¹³ the *Guide* increasingly


¹³ As quoted in Rohrer, *From Demons to Dependents*, 48. The *Pocket Guide to Japan* was issued as a field manual for occupation personnel serving in Japan, and, as the wording of its earlier version shows, was first written when an invasion of Japan was still expected to be necessary.
came to depict a “travelogue nature of occupation duty and the Occupationaire's role as unofficial
ambassador.” Fraternization with the Japanese populace had advanced well ahead of these revisions
to the guide, however, as both letters to Stars and Stripes—Pacific Edition and various accounts
(fictional or otherwise) attest. Owing as much to the haphazard policies of the early occupation as to a
failure to assess how readily American soldiers would interact with the Japanese, Supreme
Commander, Allied Powers (SCAP) had at best broad and ill-defined policies regulating fraternization
and in many cases none at all. Policymakers therefore found themselves attempting to catch up with
what forms of fraternization GIs were already engaged in. Historian Scott Rohrer notes, “SCAP took
months to develop a coherent orientation strategy and longer to implement it, by which time
Occupationaires had largely oriented themselves.” By the time regulations restricting fraternization
between Americans and Japanese civilians were established, the extent to and ways in which they were
flouted had already become comical to average occupation personnel and, whether or not they
admitted it, to many of their superiors as well. When his meeker travel companion Bob asks in shock
why they are heading to an off-limits location (in this case, a brothel), the fictional and boisterous
color character “Sarge” Pudniak in Martin Bronfenbrunner’s Fusako and the Army, a story of GI-Japanese
romance in the early years of occupation, quips: “Off limits? They always are.” Facilities classified
as off-limits constituted the vast majority of Japanese homes, restaurants, and sights worth seeing to
most GIs, and were largely ignored as a result. As fraternization policies waxed and waned, SCAP
soon required occupation personnel to take brief courses in Japanese culture before beginning their
duties, and encouraged tourism and shopping as a means of facilitating friendly interaction between
American personnel and Japanese citizens. Permission had been granted to activities which
occupation soldiers had long since realized were safe, and had never felt compelled to seek approval

14 Ibid, 48.
15 Rohrer, From Demons to Dependents, 40. Most of the Allied (especially American) planning had been put into an
invasion, with comparatively little thought given to what the occupation that would follow.
16 Bronfenbrunner, Martin. Fusako and the Army: An Episode of Occupation. 25.
17 Shibusawa, America’s Geisha Ally. 16-18.
for in the first place.

The attempts of GIs to explore their surroundings and interact with Japanese civilians were not without incident, amusing or otherwise. John Coleman, a member of the first American arrivals at Yokohama, recalled being spit at by Japanese women when he ventured into Tokyo (without clearance, of course) and a mass exodus of Japanese audience members upon their discovery that Americans were in their midst when he and a friend went to see a movie. Bill Hume, a cartoonist and sailor who had served twice in the occupation, often drew caricatures of both the Japanese (most notably the fictional “Babysan,” to whom we will return in a later chapter) and American servicemen, as well as the absurdities governing their interactions. While praising the Americans’ attempt to learn at the very least a modicum of the Japanese language, Hume mused on their seeming inability to realize the limits of their understanding:

“Most servicemen […] manage to pick up a few shreds of the language, and, with true American confidence, as soon as they manage to mispronounce three or four words of the Japanese language they are sure they know everything there is to know about it […] As the American blunders and bluffs his way through the unfamiliar maze of oriental custom he practically shouts his ignorance or lack of consideration for the Japanese way of life.”

Doris Schwartz, recalling an episode in front of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, suggested to New York Times readers that Americans were not always the ones from whom the Japanese should learn, but often the reverse. Witnessing a GI from New York City corral a Japanese youngster into giving him a tour of the grounds around the emperor's palace in Tokyo, Schwartz overheard their conversation: “O.K., Joe,' we heard the GI say to his guide in a tough East New York accent. 'C'mon now, next ting we'll taka lookit de Imperial Joint where dis Emperor gink lives.' In faultless English the Jap replied, 'It will be a pleasure to escort you there.'”

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18 Interview with Coleman, John F. Rutgers Oral History Archives of World War II. [date of interview!]
20 Schwartz, Letters from an Army Nurse in Japan.
The politeness extended the conquerors by the conquered, to cartoonist Bill Hume, indicated a balance of kindness starkly in favor of the Japanese. “The American often seems so conceited that he thinks everyone must know and understand everything that is American,” wrote Hume,\(^{21}\) and the occupation's personnel, as well as Americans at home, would do well to be more open-minded during their sojourn to Japan:

> “Everyone always points out differences between the Japanese and Occidentals […] But there is much we can learn from those of the Far East—their polite manners, their self-discipline, their peace of mind, their love of life, their adaptability, their sense of humor. Such things we haven in common but perhaps they have mastered the situation a bit better.”\(^{22}\)

There was always a great deal to see and do in Japan, and always one of the conquered nation more than willing to help the curious GI explore Japan, something which Americans could be hard-pressed to

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\(^{22}\) Ibid, 86.
find at home.\textsuperscript{23}

In many of these vignettes, the American comes away looking the fool, and the Japanese patient and tolerant (if barely) of the American’s ignorance. This, in stark contrast with images of Japanese inferiority prevalent throughout the war, is simultaneously revealing of a willingness of many occupation personnel to admit parity in levels of “sophistication” with the Japanese and a more sympathetic image of what Japan might have to offer to the world and, more specifically, to America itself. Requests for trinkets from Japan by relatives of occupation personnel and stories told by soldiers recounting their exploits to those at home restored interest in the more “mysterious” aspects of Japanese culture that had inspired American wonder and curiosity before the war. Both literally to occupation personnel and abstractly in the imaginations of many Americans, Japan and its people resumed its image as an exotic locale full of mystery and wonder to be explored, aided by the imaginary journeys Americans had resumed in Japan and actual travel undertaken on an unprecedented scale.

In her memoir of her time in the occupation, Lucy Crockett addressed the misgivings many Americans back home harbored about “their boys” associating with Japanese civilians. Though not without exaggeration, she informed her readers that “whether the folks at home like the idea or not, the truth is that scarcely a month after the last shot was fired Americans with the Occupation were feeling no hatred for our little yellow foe of World War II.”\textsuperscript{24} “Certainly none of us during the war years would have believed that one day we would consider the feelings of the despised Nip,” she admitted, but

“...it isn't just the postwar Occupationer who is taking to the Japanese. Today the same soldier who fought his way at such cost up the Pacific Islands may feel real affection toward a family into which he has been 'adopted.' Many among the few remaining campaigners, whose ribbons bear bitter evidence of personal contact with a ruthless enemy, are as quick as anyone to believe that 'the Japanese people aren't half bad' [...] Easygoing, we are quick to forget. Even if some of us never do get to like the Nips, it's difficult to remember to hate them.”\textsuperscript{25}

Becoming “adopted” into a Japanese family, i.e. frequently visiting and dining with them, became

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid, 112.
\textsuperscript{24} Crockett, Lucy Herndon. \textit{Popcorn on the Ginza}. 14.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, 14; 22.
fairly commonplace, and a site for the dissolution of animosity toward former Japanese soldiers as they were seen in a familial context. Imperial Army soldiers became fathers and sons; warriors of the “Jap horde” became the men across the table. After bitter fighting in the Pacific, wrote Crockett, American soldiers “are swapping [presents] and drinking toasts at sukiyaki* dinners with men whom not so long ago they were calling every vile name that could be printed.”

It is difficult to ascertain just how many soldiers became “adopted” as such, and among them how many had seen battle in the Pacific. But the ability of many to divorce their experiences in the bitter island fighting from the civilians now before them reveals the extent to which even those most directly involved in the war could forget the passionate hatred many of them had carried for the Japanese.

While unease seems characteristic of occupation personnel who had fought against the Japanese in the Pacific during their early stay in Japan, reports from the time indicate that their replacements, who most often had seen no combat duty in the Pacific and simply awaited deployment, came to Japan with some of the most intense feelings of anti-Japanese hatred in tow. These replacements, wrote journalist Noel Busch in a December 1946 article for Life magazine, “are often imbued with a fine martial frenzy against the Japanese as a race” largely absent in their compatriots who had actually fought Japanese soldiers in the brutal island-hopping campaigns, many of whom had since learned to discard such fears.

These new occupation soldiers, continued another writer, were far more likely to withhold respect and common courtesy for Japanese civilians and “paw” at Japanese women, earning the ire of Japanese men and women alike and sullying the American image.

Greater caution was urged in ensuring that these new recruits learned how to behave, and that they could not afford the luxury of haughtiness if the United States was to be successful in winning over the Japanese. Busch remained confident, however, that time in Japan and personal contact would be the best remedy for

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26 Ibid, 18. *Sukiyaki* is a traditional Japanese dish, consisting of meat simmered with noodles, vegetables, and various other ingredients.


these animosities. These fresh soldiers would come to realize, just as the first round of personnel had learned, that not every Japanese civilian was a die-hard fanatic eagerly awaiting death in a banzai charge. Examples were made of the more flagrant violators of Japanese private spaces in order to keep soldiers in line and prevent the friction that such brazen acts, particularly over a long period of occupation, would undoubtedly engender. Though putting the Japanese in their place was important to policymakers, oppression was not an acceptable course of action if their ambitious reform agendas were to be realized. For this, the need to cultivate a degree of faith in the Japanese, however tentative, became increasingly acute.

Not all pundits offered praise for the defeated foe, however. In an October 1945 piece in the *New York Times Magazine*, General Carlos P. Romulo, then Resident Commissioner of the Philippines, strongly cautioned the American public against accepting the penitent image projected by most Japanese civilians. “The Japanese are behaving now like good little children taking punishment for past naughtiness,” he averred, and “toward our occupational forces in Japan the Japanese are making every show of studied courtesy and superficial politeness.” But in his view this could prove dangerously disarming if believed wholeheartedly. “This facade of courtesy is as well-planned and deliberate as was the attack on Pearl Harbor,” wrote Romulo, “and whether or not our sons' sons will fight anew in Japan must depend upon our present understanding and guarding against that mock humility […] Our army of occupation is in a country still capable of plotting stabs in the back.” Vigilance in the defeated nation was key, and Americans must not, he warned, be taken in by an apparent friendliness and innocence on the part of the Japanese. “We must look beyond the bowing and bouquets and watch every movement in a country that has lost face but not lost hope of revenge.”

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personnel, and vice-versa. Others expressed fears that Japan’s seemingly rapid adoption of American-style democracy might simply be in the pursuit of American power, recognized as a means to an end rather than an egalitarian political system.\textsuperscript{32}

Though not in response to Romulo’s article, a number of letters and pieces written immediately thereafter indicate a reluctance to accept his arguments in favor of greater suspicion and intense scrutiny of the Japanese populace, feelings that had quickly dissipated within the early months of the occupation. This is not to say that there were no perceived dangers in Japan, such as a resurgence of militarism or renewed imperial ambitions, but the level of alarm was seldom as high as Romulo would have it be. The friendliness extended American GIs, the “friendliness of a beaten people for their conquerors—toward an army that had spread destruction and death among their cities,” wrote Jules Henry, was not merely a ruse disguised by obsequious behavior. Rather, it did not merit suspicion but “demands a statesmanship in order that it may be preserved and used to rebuild a democratic Japan that will continue to be friendly to the United States.” Though allowing that “Americans cannot conceive of themselves as friendly to a conquering Japan, [and] naturally find it difficult to conceive of a conquered Japan being friendly to them,” Henry urged readers to accept the friendly overtures of the Japanese people as sincere, and a staging point from which to improve relations and realize the occupation’s liberal reforms.\textsuperscript{33} Throughout October and November 1945 articles and letters began appearing in \textit{Stars and Stripes—Pacific Edition} listing the projected dates and casualties of the averted invasion of Japan, while happily noting that rather than suffering these casualties battling through Japanese streets and fields, GIs were now leisurely strolling through Japanese cities and enjoying weekends in the countryside.\textsuperscript{34} Staggering figures of projected American and Japanese casualties had counted on and in turn been bolstered by assumptions of fanatical resistance once the home islands had been reached.

\textsuperscript{32} Walliser, ”Sunset in the East.”
\textsuperscript{33} Henry, “Initial Reactions,” 19.
\textsuperscript{34} Rohrer, \textit{From Demons to Dependents}, 75.
dying in last ditch efforts were a hard sell on soldiers walking among civilians there with relatively little incident.

*Life* contributor Noel Busch was especially opposed to the notion that the Japanese were plotting against the occupiers. Unwilling to accept claims like Romulo's that the Japanese people were contemplating their revenge, Busch declared that “the notion that Japanese submissiveness in defeat represents some sort of conscious trickery on their part is as erroneous as the prewar notion—that they were a monkey race that we could defeat overnight if the occasion to do so ever arose.” Such assumptions, he argued, would simply be a continuation of misguided American foreign policy that had caused Americans to act upon grave miscalculations with disastrous consequences.\(^{35}\) While sympathizing with a reticence among many Americans at home to accept this new image of the Japanese, who might turn to “belittling it as far as possible in order to render it plausible […] that the Japanese are up to another one of their characteristically deceitful tricks,” the chief difficulty in accepting this lay not with Japanese actions but with Americans themselves. Explaining the Japanese reaction to defeat and their surrender “cannot even be defined in terms which would normally occur to the American mind”; though it seemed strange, and to Busch in a peculiarly Japanese way, the Japanese surrender was as sincere as any could be. A “stab in the back” was therefore not to be a point of concern.\(^{36}\) Commentators stubbornly distrustful of Japanese intentions, who often grossly underestimated their ability to abandon the ideologies that had led them to ruin, became increasingly fewer in number and lost the ears of Americans who now worried more about the influence of postwar unrest in the region and economic turmoil in a devastated Japanese economy than the possibility of concealed vendettas and treachery.

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\(^{35}\) Busch, *Fallen Sun*, 35.

\(^{36}\) Ibid, 29-31.
II

“They Suffered the Same as We Did”: Women, Children, and a Japan in Ruins in the American Mind and Media

Devastated Landscapes: Reactions to a Japan in Ruins

Noel Busch wrote in 1946 that some of the greatest obstacles to accepting the reality of a generally sincere Japanese cooperation were commentators who had not been on the scene and were therefore unable (and unwilling) to accept anything that failed to match their presuppositions. With a growing influx of correspondents and a flood of accounts of life in Japan from occupation personnel, the opinions put forth by such naysayers came into question as they came into conflict with those who had seen defeated Japan for themselves. Prominently featured in much of this reporting was the utter devastation of Japanese cities, and this focus on devastation provided powerful images arguing against any fears of Japanese civilians rising up any time soon. This became not only an affirmation of the prostration of Japan's military capabilities, but also evoked sympathy for people whose homes had been reduced to rubble in the massive air raids against the Japanese home islands. Many reporters assured their readers that one look at a Japanese city would soften even the most inveterately anti-Japanese Americans' insistence that Japan might rise up at any moment. “Perhaps you in America find it hard to realize how thoroughly the Japanese know they were completely and abjectly defeated. It would be superlatively easy,” assured journalist Harold Noble, “were you to live, as the Japanese live, in the midst of rubble wastes which make up most of urban Japan today.”

“Life in Tokyo,” a December 1945 article in Life magazine, featured, among other things, bombed out homes, a devastated Tokyo, and a picture of children playing in the street. Beneath a photograph of the children, readers were

37 Busch, Fallen Sun, 47-8.
38 With most of Allied bombing concentrated on Japan's major cities (most of which were 67% or more destroyed by war's end), urban Japanese saw a precipitous decline in standards of living during the war and occupation years. Rural Japanese civilians were largely spared Allied bombing, resulting in relative prosperity in the occupation years owing to urban food shortages and in lucrative black market exchanges.
39 Noble, Harold J. “We're Teaching the Children to Lead Japan.” Saturday Evening Post. 27 July 1946.
informed that air raids had killed their parents and destroyed their homes, leaving them with neither
shelter nor parental guidance and protection. 40 Though not a direct indictment of American air raids
over civilian population centers, the photographer's caption did not hesitate to point out that the source
of the children's predicament was American B-29s. Thinking of fanatical Japanese soldiers dying in air
raids was one thing; seeing children homeless and alone as a result of American air attacks was another
entirely. When the devastation was seen to have affected children too young to have taken any part in
the war, it was far easier to identify its victims as suffering innocents rather than those who had simply
eaten the bitter fruits of their nation's military expansion.

The destruction in Tokyo was so great that one journalist declared: “Even atomized Hiroshima
could be lost in a minor corner” of the city.41 Stories of survival amidst the rubble became all the more
effective at garnering sympathy for Japanese civilians attempting to rebuild their lives, figuratively and
literally. These efforts to rebuild became a means of distinguishing occupied Japan from its past, with
its nation literally destroyed and left with no choice but to begin anew. Such depictions received much
favorable reaction. One reader of Time magazine went so far as to applaud the publication for,
according to the reader, being

“...the first to call attention to the fact that the Japanese people have been the first, and only, of the war-ravaged
nations, to pitch into the ruins and start rebuilding [...] While other nations have given in to self-pity and threats to
go all-out for Communism, the Japanese are proving that hard work and plain guts are the only methods which
will enable a beaten nation to revive itself.”42

The efforts of the Japanese to rebuild were juxtaposed with those of the Allies and defeated Germany,
and in an odd reversal of wartime imagery (wherein even Nazi Germany was seen more as a wayward
brother than any number of the pejorative terms thrown at the Japanese) Japan emerged as the nation
working hardest to slough off the old order which brought devastation on a global scale and start life
anew. This spirit was necessary, wrote Noble, to bring about the success of the occupation, which now
lay as much in Japanese hands as in American ones. Now a site of potential cooperation and rebirth

42 Letters to the Editor. Time. 22 September 1947.
rather than cause for despair, Noble remarked it was “a pleasant surprise to find so many American officers and civilians working so hard to help our enemies to a more decent life.”43 Through rebuilding the burned and blasted cityscapes of Japan with both Japanese and American efforts, the occupation therein became in many ways a joint effort rather than a purely American one, unwittingly or otherwise granting the Japanese greater agency in American narratives of the rebuilding of the occupied nation. This soon carried over to discourse on Japan's economic rehabilitation, with the onus of responsibility for reconstructing Japan increasingly placed upon the Japanese themselves in American public discourse. Seen as competent in reconstruction at the very least, the more burdens the Japanese seemed willing to bear, the more Americans were content to place responsibility on Japanese shoulders.


Personal encounter with Japanese suffering was highly influential in undermining wartime

43 Noble, “We're Teaching the Children to Lead Japan.”
rhetoric among early occupation officials and correspondents, who bore witness to leveled cities, grieving families, and a largely decimated Japan that later occupation personnel might not see as Japan gradually rebuilt itself. John Garcia, who had worked as a courier when Pearl Harbor was bombed and later served in the Pacific Theater, contrasted wartime imagery of the Japanese with what experience had shown him. “They would show us movies,” Garcia later told journalist Studs Terkel in an interview. “Japanese women didn’t cry. They would accept the ashes stoically. I knew different. They went home and cried.” U.S. Marine Victor Tolley, bitterly hateful of anyone and anything Japanese during the war, recalled how his anger crumbled upon encountering a Japanese boy in a ruined city, who took him home to meet his family:

“I had nothing but contempt for the Japanese. I used to hear all the horror stories. We were trained to kill them. They’re our enemy. Look what they did in Pearl Harbor. They asked for it and now we’re gonna give it to ‘em. That’s how I felt until I met this boy and his sister […] I realized that these people didn’t want to fight us […] they suffered the same as we did. They lost sons and daughters and relatives, and they hurt too.”

On the pregnant sister's desk sat a picture of her fiancée, believed to have been killed in the Pacific. Tolley could not bear to think that the child would never see his or her father. Physical destruction could be undone and cities rebuilt, but the acknowledgement that the Japanese had suffered personal loss and would never see loved ones again elicited a far stronger emotional response from those faced with the misery endured by the other side.

Empathy for Japanese bereavement cast doubt upon the necessity of American measures in the war, as well as the notion that the Japanese were individually responsible for what befell their nation. In a letter to the New York Times in 1946, reader Rebecca Evans sharply criticized a Times editorial from the week prior asserting that the consequences of the war, including the massive death toll among Japanese civilians, was the inevitable result of “their own unhappy choice.” Quoting Lord Mountbatten, British commander of the Southeast Asia Theater in World War II, the writer countered that Japanese civilians “were perhaps less responsible than any other people for their Government's decision to go to

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Wartime cries of “Remember Pearl Harbor!” were still echoed by those who felt that the Japanese people as a whole bore responsibility for their current suffering. But to those more open to a reevaluation of the wartime truism that Japanese people were all capable of further “Pearl Harbors,” differentiating between those who did and did not have a role to play in that fateful attack became more important than keeping the vigilance it had aroused in Americans alive.

As wartime fervor subsided, the ruin wrought by Allied bombings of Japan during the latter years of the war left America in a difficult moral position, and a search for further justification of the bombardment of civilian centers began to creep into reflections on the fighting in the Pacific. After

Photograph in Life magazine of a Japanese man praying at the grave of his wife, who was killed in Allied air raids. Source: Life, 3 December 1945, p. 112.

absolving the average Japanese subject of much responsibility for the war (arguing that Japan collectively went to war “with the deepest misgivings”), columnist Jules Henry ventured further that the Japanese had in turn absolved Americans of their culpability in bombing their cities. American air raids served less to inflame anti-American sentiment, he insisted, than to galvanize the Japanese public against their wartime leaders and profiteers whose “economically privileged position grew in proportion as the crisis deepened.” In assuring readers that a growing distrust and resentment of Japanese elites far outstripped any misgivings or resentment toward Americans (now “the symbol of

war's cessation and a possible lamp of hope”) among Japanese civilians, the issue of Japanese ire at the decimation of their cities could be set aside. More importantly, it could be seen (though erroneously) as a potentially disruptive issue now resolved, neither a stumbling block for American reforms in Japan nor something for which Americans should need to feel remorse.

Despite optimistic claims to the contrary, these feelings of resentment had not subsided entirely on either side, and remain strong among many individuals to the present day. Reconsiderations of the culpability of the average Japanese person in the Pearl Harbor attack, though increasingly frequent, were always made in response to, and often outnumbered by, continuing assertions that Japanese soldiers and civilians alike wholly deserved the destruction visited upon their islands based in “Remember Pearl Harbor!” rhetoric. Americans rose to the rhetorical defense of the Japanese people in greater numbers than before and during the war, but were nearly always on the defensive, expressing dissenting opinions against far more numerous proponents of a stern vigilance over Japan and assurances that its civilians learned a hard lesson. For many Japanese as well, no amount of GI rations could erase the fact that the Allies, in particular the Americans who oversaw the occupation, had leveled their cities and killed their sons and daughters, siblings and parents. Admission of one's own sins did not, wrote Martin Bronfenbrunner, necessarily absolve the former enemy of theirs:

“However much they might read of Japanese atrocities and war crimes, the once-bombed Tomiokans would forever consider the balance of atrocity as 'favorable' to America. To their minds, America's exports of atrocities would always exceed her imports.”

Forgiving did not always mean forgetting, and tensions between the people of the two nations remained high for those who were not directly presented with experiences contrary to prevailing stereotypes, and Americans whose only contact with Japan remained the bombing of distant Pearl Harbor clung to that memory much as many Japanese civilians clung to a hatred of America brought to the surface every day by their nation's ruin. This should not, however, discount those who now argued against such notions both in America and in Japan. Dissident voices during and immediately after the war, those

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48 Bronfenbrunner, *Fusako and the Army*, 27.
who sought to combat blanket condemnations of the Japanese people as a whole grew far more vocal in the postwar period, especially from the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki onward. A minority while the fighting continued and after America's first troops had landed at Atsugi and Yokohama, they were nevertheless a sizable and growing group once these soldiers hit the ground and tales of a generally peaceful Japan quietly accepting the American presence trickled back to the United States.

Images such as this, showing American soldiers using parts of a destroyed Japanese war plane factory as a diving board, symbolically reinforced both notions of the total eradication of the Japanese war machine and American military superiority. Source: Life, 28 August 1950, p. 90.

Owing to the constant scrutiny of the Japanese press by occupation censors, it is difficult to ascertain just how much outright criticism of America and its role in Japan's destruction would have surfaced in Japan's media. Similar strictures did not exist in American publications, and though journalists undeniably operated under pressures to report certain kinds of news, that largely positive or neutral reports of Japanese civilians dominated human interest articles at the time is revealing when the
tendency of writers to seize upon Japanese people who still harbored a hatred of America is taken into consideration. Both personal and journalistic accounts present a Japanese people either eagerly or begrudgingly accepting the American presence, but accepting it without a fight nonetheless. Letters and editorials suspicious of Japanese intentions were distrustful not as a result of Japanese resistance (there was little, if any) but of observed compliance on the part of the Japanese, unnerved by the same cooperation that reassured Americans more open to the idea of a subdued Japan. All witnessed a Japan submitting to American rule, for the time being at least, and those who continued to scrutinize the Japanese did so as a result of lingering suspicions rather than current suspicious activity.

A sentiment echoed often in the press at the time was that “the Japanese admire victory in war above all else,” and would therefore respect the exercise of American authority as they were, in fact, the victors. In some cases, journalists would go so far as to argue that the American interlude was not merely accepted but welcomed with open arms. “Far from regarding the occupation as an unwelcome intrusion,” wrote Noel Busch, the Japanese “seem to consider it more in the nature of a special Providential benefaction.” America's dismantling of Japan's empire and destruction of its cities, then, was little more than a blip on the path to Japan's salvation from itself at America's hands. This logic was for many Americans sufficient justification for the increasingly problematic realities of their country's wartime strategies that had claimed hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilian lives. For what should the victors regret when greeted with such an apparently warm reception from the defeated people, welcomed as “Providential benefaction” and having rescued Japan from itself? What were hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties when they meant that millions more would live? The notion of crippling Japan in order to save it was one formed after the fact. Strategies to save enemy lives saw negligible support during the war, especially when weighed against planning put into the best means of destroying them. Retroactive justification was thus applied to wartime conduct now shrouded

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49 Busch, “Report on Japan.”
in a moral ambiguity largely absent in wartime.

After the early months of the occupation, reportage on Japan largely moved away from cautionary tales of the dangers in trusting Japanese people and the “fanatical emperor-worshipers” image popular during wartime. For such charged imagery as that representing a monolithic (and often monkey-like) Japanese unwilling and unable to surrender to reason or military force to be overturned within months of the cessation of hostilities is by no means a negligible phenomenon. While wartime sentiments lingered longer in the minds of the American public than they did in much of contemporary print media and testimony from occupation personnel, their gradual transformation can be attributed to the increasingly positive (though still often cautiously optimistic) accounts provided in tales to relatives at home and print editorials from reporters on the ground in Japan. These accounts of the plight of urban Japanese in the wake of war, amicable interaction and “adoption” into Japanese families, and the defeated nation as tourist attraction presented a Japan more convincingly different than that which the...
United States had faced in wartime. Among the most powerful influences on this transformation of perception was a transmutation of two segments of the Japanese population, women and children, resulting in forgiving images of a people divorced from the wartime experience (and therefore from culpability) that coalesced with renderings of a Japan in need of corrective American guidance and protection.

**Women and Children: America Plays Parent/Feminizing the Former Enemy**

Once American soldiers made their way beyond the retinues of Japanese soldiers manning the reception, Japanese children playing amid the rubble became a common sight and a point of daily contact with both the youngsters and their families. These children, many of whom had been sent to the countryside to be kept safe from the increasingly frequent bombing raids on the cities during the war, came trickling back soon after the surrender. While often hidden indoors by their parents, who feared abuses by the conquering armies in the early days of the occupation, most Japanese adults soon learned that their children were safe around the occupiers and felt less reluctance to let their children play outside and, before long, with the conquerors themselves. Within weeks of the first encounter between a GI and a Japanese child, the chocolate and chewing gum rations distributed by servicemen became a ubiquitous symbol of the occupation for these youths. Rather than scurrying away at the approach of an American jeep, as in the first days of occupation, children soon clamored to greet the Americans with a “harro” and, hands extended, scrambled after the rations most GIs so readily doled out in area under American occupation.

This constant contact between occupation personnel and Japanese children was not entirely successful in diffusing tensions between occupier and occupied, and many Japanese parents continued to tolerate rather than appreciate the interactions between their children and American soldiers. Bearing witness to conquering soldiers providing for their children as they could not was undoubtedly an emasculating experience for many Japanese fathers and humiliating to many mothers. But this did

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51 Rohrer, *From Demons to Dependents*, 90-91.
not prevent the process from eroding the suspicions of adults who bore no such compunctions about their children playing with soldiers in an occupying army. At worst, seeing one's children play safely with American soldiers confirmed that the conquerors would not harm them; at best, it demonstrated a common humanity, much as witnessing Japanese suffering inspired such realizations in American servicemen.

Rapidly abandoning fear of the conquerors, children began to drastically alter American perceptions toward Japanese civilians and contribute to dramatic reconstitutions thereof. While reimagining Japanese adults as sincerely welcoming of the Americans would take more time for many of the occupiers, it was difficult, if not impossible, for those who came into contact with Japanese children to view them soldiers-in-training. “Our grim fear of treachery virtually vanished,” wrote Coast Guard flotilla commander Blair Walliser, “when we stopped to examine a block of bombed-out houses and a shy little girl came up and offered us an orange.”52 This act of sharing meager resources (most urban Japanese lacked even reliable sources of daily sustenance at the time) and a figurative olive branch to the conquerors was a powerful image, recasting children who had so recently been seen as future soldiers to be thrown against American armies to the emissaries of a new peace. Refusing the orange and the sentiments it represented, being the peaceful overture that it was, would be a nigh-impossible task for both Walliser and his fellow occupation personnel.

Openness exhibited by Japanese children altered not only the perspectives of American GIs but that of Japanese parents as well, making it easier for many Japanese adults to accept that the occupiers were not the rapacious conquerors they had heard so much of in their own military propaganda. The amicable relationships between the majority of GIs and the children with whom they came into contact allowed many of the more hesitant adults in the occupied country to overcome their reservations about American soldiers and begin interacting with them more directly and beyond the necessary minimum.53

53 Shibusawa, America’s Geisha Ally, 15.
The effect of these GI-child interactions was not lost on one American soldier, who recalled that “when

the older people watching our every movement saw that we weren't bayoneting their kids and tearing them apart, but instead were treating them with kindness, they realized they weren't quite the monsters they had expected. Soon the [door] panels began sliding open.”54 Wartime propaganda resulted in hesitation on both sides of the war, and proving Japanese propaganda wrong by example became a personal mission for the more idealistic GIs who now saw themselves as American envoys.

Walliser’s recollection of the little girl and the orange coincided with many other accounts that contributed to changing the perceptions of Americans at home, at least with regards to Japanese children. Among others, Saturday Evening Post writer Harold Noble affirmed the growing notion that Japanese children were not, in fact, hopeless militarists-to-be, but rather the hope of Japan. “The dreams and the dogmas of a misguided generation have collapsed into rubble,” wrote Noble in 1946, “and if there remains any true hope for the future out here, it lies with these friendly children, as yet unspoiled.” Programs aimed at reforming the Japanese education system, argued Noble, were the most important contribution that the occupation could make to preventing a resurgence of Japanese expansionism, more important than even economic and constitutional reforms.55 Doris Schwartz

54 As quoted in Ibid, 15.
55 Noble, Harold J. “We're Teaching the Children to Lead Japan.”
similarly exhorted readers of the *New York Times* that “[Japanese] children are attractive and it's almost impossible not to be drawn to them. Babies in any land seem beyond the scope of war.” Eagerly interacting with Japanese children was not a sign of America “going soft,” but a recognition of a youthful innocence that placed them outside of the war paradigm entirely.

Such images of Japanese children “unspoiled” by militarism aided in divorcing images of a ravenous, warlike nation from those of a peaceful and pliable Japan under occupation. The hands of Japanese children held not grenades but oranges for the conqueror, or were outstretched awaiting American rations to fill an empty stomach and, symbolically if unconsciously acknowledging the role of America as provider in the interim. Children were transformed into victims of a “misguided generation” of militant leaders, saved by American righteousness and freed from “feudalistic” thought. Because Schwartz and many others placed the children “beyond the scope of war,” the way was opened for both a break with Japan's expansionist past through its children and the possibility that even Japanese adults had not been the fanatics many Americans had believed them to be. The extension of this harmless, indeed hopeful image to the Japanese populace as a whole was then achieved all the more easily by rendering the entire nation as one of children.

With most of urban Japan now dependent upon America for its survival, a next logical step was the extension of the image of dependent children to the nation as a whole, which in turn allowed for the transition to support for a more tolerant, if not paternalistic, relationship with Japan. With contact extending beyond chocolates, chewing gum, and bows in passing, the generally amicable conduct of American GIs and the open curiosity of Japanese children facilitated the deconstruction of wartime images at first in Japan, and then beyond the Pacific in the conquerors' home country. But an extension of this to the Japanese citizenry as a whole rendered images of a compliant and cooperative Japanese populace more palatable for an American public wary of treachery. Japanese children naturally provided the image of dependents now bereft of the wartime authority, the Japanese military elite, who

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56 Schwartz, “Letters from an Army Nurse in Japan.”
had led them astray and into war with the U.S.\textsuperscript{57}

This newly adopted American paternalism was not wholly benign, however, and was based as much in prewar notions of the Japanese people as a “childlike race” or, as some would have it, monkeys behind white civilization in both emotional and physical development. Notions of the superiority of Euro-American civilization, and American civilization in particular as the penultimate in history, placed the United States in a position to guide a “childlike” Japan in a march towards an inherently superior Western democracy.\textsuperscript{58} Though the Meiji (1868-1912) and Taisho (1912-1926) periods in Japanese history had been the closest to realizing “American progress” in Japan, the thinking went, all of the years from 1931 to the present, as well as the remainder of Japan's roughly 2000 years of history, had led nowhere. Those who felt the task before America was to assist the Japanese in rebuilding their nation along American lines saw this as an opportunity to finish the work begun by Commodore Matthew Perry, who “opened” Japan to the world (that this was accomplished by gunboat diplomacy was often ignored), by finally bringing Japan fully into the Euro-American world order. Emblematic of this sentiment, Noel Busch wrote in 1946 that Japan's surrender to America “marked a global milestone in Occidental progress, and the passage of European civilization across the Earth's greatest, final barrier.” This “final barrier” to the extension of “European civilization” across the world had been toppled, and all that remained was to erase the childishness that had prevented Japan from accepting the inevitable march of Euro-American society.\textsuperscript{59}

Intended to recast Japan in a positive light though it was, this re-rendering of the nation as one of children was as denigrating as it was forgiving of Japanese civilians. At a Senate hearing after being relieved of duty as commander of the occupation, General Douglass MacArthur likened the Japanese people to “a boy of twelve,” and opined that America's task in Japan was vastly different from that which it faced in its zone of occupation in Germany. There, he insisted, the United States was dealing

\textsuperscript{57} Rohrer, \textit{From Demons to Dependents}, 23.

\textsuperscript{58} Shibusawa, \textit{America's Geisha Ally}, 59.

\textsuperscript{59} Busch, \textit{Fallen Sun}, 10.
with a more “mature race,” and a coddling approach was more appropriate to Japan than the stern measures that the Germans might resent but undoubtedly understand. The Japanese citizenry, who had hitherto held him in generally high esteem, were shocked at his assessment of Japan's collective maturity.60 Most Americans were not. On the contrary: they agreed.

Explanations of Japan's imperial expansion in the Pacific since the war's end had in many instances begun to acknowledge economic and security motivations, namely the unrest caused by shortage of arable land in Japan. Many also reworked depictions of a nation hell-bent on subjugating the world to its rule into those of a wayward child who had simply thrown a temper tantrum on a massive scale, to the tune of millions of lives.61 Noel Busch occupied positions acknowledging economic, political, and security factors that drove the Japanese to resolve their international dilemma through military solutions, but ultimately argued more strongly in favor of the “child-like” aspects of the “Japanese character” as the chief cause. The qualities which Busch felt summed up the “Japanese character” were proof to him that the nation had at best reached an adolescent stage of mental development:

“Their docility when confronted with by authority, and their lack of self-discipline when exempted from it […] these are the flexibility, the obedience, the unruliness and stoicism of adults who possess and cling, in a way unimaginable to Occidentals, to the emotional status of childhood.”62

Japanese culture in its entirety was, by Busch's reasoning, simply a manifestation of this “childishness,” and attempts at adopting Western dress and institutions were better likened to a child attempting to imitate his father than a developing nation. The Japanese statesman, opined Busch, gave the impression that “he is trying to be grown up and the effort is as absurd as that of a small boy wearing his father's suit on Hallowe'en.”63 (The fact that Japan had achieved industrialization far faster than any of its Euro-American “superiors” was often overlooked). Being “unimaginable to Occidentals,” Japan's “childishness” was weighed against a presumed American maturity indulged in by MacArthur

60 Shibusawa, America's Geisha Ally, 54-55.
61 Ibid, 24-25.
62 Busch, Fallen Sun, 175.
63 Ibid, 176-77.
and others. By recasting them as children rather than monstrous adults, the Japanese people could then need American discipline to set them right, as a parent might punish a misbehaving child. While Japan's status was lowered in Busch and others' eyes to that of a fitful child who was now in “time out,” attempts were made to justify America's “superior” position vis-a-vis Japan by portraying America as the only society fit to discipline the island nation. Europe and Asia were seen as architects of their own destruction, and American interventions necessitated. Though cultural linkages with Europe were emphasized when expedient, its two devastating wars within thirty years were touted as a call to the United States to accept the mandate of world leadership from a Europe losing its hold (America's frequent wars and overseas interventions were apparently irrelevant to this reasoning). Japan was a nation to be punished, though not too firmly, and the United States was the only country “mature” enough to do so.

Legitimation of America's new role as tutor/parent and Japan's as student/child also drew on sins of omission, particularly with regard to the agency played by Japanese civilians, officials, and intellectuals themselves in many areas of occupation reform. Coverage of educational and democratic reforms contained little mention of Japanese involvement other than as passive recipients of American initiatives. This did not always reflect the intense dialogue that often took place between American and Japanese officials, and reports on educational reforms in Japan often lacked any mention of initiative on the part of Japanese teachers who wanted reform. Though admission of active Japanese involvement in reforming their own institutions could be beneficial to images of a “repentant” Japan, renderings of the defeated people as only able to “imitate and misinterpret primary concepts,” namely those of “American” origin, were more advantageous in reinforcing an American teacher-Japanese student binary. While American reportage depicted an eager embrace of democracy in Japan (at a superficial level at the very least), emphasis on a perceived inability of Japanese civilians to understand

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65 One occupation official tasked with overseeing the drastic restructuring of the education system estimated that as much as sixty percent of the reforms eventually enacted were the result of suggestions and ideas submitted by liberal *Japanese* educators. Ibid, 71.
its deeper meanings “implied that Americans were in full command of its principles.” This approach

thus confirmed American “moral superiority” and reinforced Japan's new subservient role. Enthusiastic though the Japanese were, such thinking dictated, a naiveté about the “true” nature of such concepts as democracy and civil liberties on the part of Japanese civilians, “childlike” as they were, called for American guidance.66

Recognition of Japanese involvement in the reconstruction of their own social institutions was forthcoming when such participation entailed the acceptance of American concepts rather than clever alteration or adaptation by liberal Japanese thinkers.67 Prewar and wartime images of Japanese people as passive recipients in need of guidance in world affairs dovetailed with growing American ambitions for international involvement. Elbert Thomas, writing in the Annals of the American Academic of Political and Social Science, declared that “Japan is a nation that definitely wants to be lead in world affairs,” had been so since Perry's arrival, and would continue to seek a guiding hand for its

66 Ibid, 71-72. For a more detailed discussion of liberal Japanese democratic and educational movements in the early occupation, see Dower, Embracing Defeat, Chapter 2.
67 This paradigm of Japanese people as unable to grasp the tenets of American democracy could then be applied to second-generation Japanese immigrants who, only one generation removed from their parents, supposedly found difficulty in understanding them as a result. This argument was used in justifying the internment of Japanese-Americans during the war by Kelley and Ryan in Star-Spangled Mikado, 215. See also Shibusawa, America's Geisha Ally, 72.
participation in the international system. By this logic, not only was there a need on the part of the Japanese populace to be led by America but a strong desire to be shown how to behave on the world stage. Wartime images of mindless militancy were replaced by those of Japan as a ready and willing follower of an American agenda. Passivity on a national scale, once criticized as one of Japan's greatest weaknesses and a prime factor in its war with Asia, the United States, and Europe, was now recast as one of its greatest hopes for the American model taking hold there.

Forgiveness of questionable American actions in wartime was tacitly pursued as well, and to this end images of smiling Japanese children welcoming American soldiers were readily put to use. Admission of any guilt in the war was an uncomfortable, if not impossible task for many Americans, but photographs in U.S. publications showing children laughing and happily playing with Americans provided a means of assuaging American doubts without admission of any American wrongdoing. Portrayals of Japanese children welcoming American soldiers signified “that they saw the 'good' within them, and thus the 'good' in the United States even after Americans had rained mass death upon Japan.” If a nation of “childlike” adults then saw its children welcome the conquerors, then by extension the “immature” people who had fought American in the Pacific bore no grudges, namely for America's bombing of civilian population centers in Japanese cities. If no resentment existed (an active imagination, ignorance, or both were required to reach such a conclusion), then there had been no wrongdoing on the part of the United States. Those who sought to defend against allegations that America's bombing tactics in the war were morally questionable found a powerful tool in portraying American military actions as justified because, they argued, the occupiers would not be as welcome as they were if they had done anything truly reprehensible. Actual Japanese children were conflated with images of “childlike” Japanese adults, with convenient omissions, to project an image of an immature nations whose children, in readily associating with the conquerors, absolved America if not negating

any guilt on the United States' part entirely.

The proliferation of this “childlike” image of a misbehaved, but not altogether ill-willed Japan, by those who sought to advance this concept met with various stumbling blocks. While Germans enjoyed extensive contacts and cultural ties to America through large numbers of ethnically German citizens there, the Japanese-American community, owing to its smaller size due to severe restrictions on Asian immigration until 1952, generally had no such advantages. It required a much greater amount of publicity for many Americans to accept this new image of “a friendly, if childlike and dependent” Japan, as well as the acceptance and integration of an American ethnic group that was not necessary in the case of well established German-American communities. Films and stories of evil Japanese males ravaging the Pacific and Asian mainland were the predominant images many Americans held of persons of Japanese descent, whether born in America, Japan, or its colonial possessions. Representations of a “feminine” Japan, however, would change this drastically.

The image of Japan as a nation of children made American guidance appear all the more necessary to Americans, but often failed to address security issues within and without Japan and growing fears of Communist “incursion” into the Japanese home islands. Rearming Japan was taken up as not only a possibility, but an essential element to ensuring security in a volatile postwar Asia. Many Americans felt that war was a likely outcome of the heightened tension between the United States and U.S.S.R. as both sought to extend their influence throughout the region, a war which would require firm footholds for the U.S. military in the region. For those who remained opposed to Japanese rearmament, the only option left in light of regional instability was to protect Japan under the United States' security umbrella. Insistence on the lingering threat of a dormant Japanese militarism thus had to give way to the notion that Japan's defenselessness required American protection. This was to be achieved through a recapitulation of Japan as, in addition to being a “nation of children,” a feminine object whose safety only American safekeeping could ensure. Children could be taught, the thinking

70 Shibusawa, America's Geisha Ally, 95.
went, but women needed protection.\textsuperscript{71} A Japan reenvisioned as feminine object to be defended by a strong, masculine America should the need arise became a basis for incorporating Japan into America's growing network of defense obligations in American public thought and discourse, “a narrative that Americans could agree to, if grudgingly, because it appeared commonsensical.”\textsuperscript{72}

Shortly after the occupation began, orientation materials for occupation soldiers prominently displayed women and children with sparse mention or depiction of Japanese adult males.\textsuperscript{73} In the American popular press photographs of delicate Japanese women in kimonos or performing Japanese motherly duties were plentiful, with the women portrayed as happy to receive American attentions or stoically enduring postwar deprivations. Japanese men, for their part, were often depicted as struggling or destitute and still wearing their military uniforms during the early months of the occupation. Theirs was a shattered \textit{military} life, the result of a lost war upon which they had erroneously embarked; women and children were depicted as civilians suffering the result of a misguided war as a Japanese \textit{male} enterprise. Despite abundant evidence that women and children had aided the war effort in auxiliary functions, “both GIs and senior officers held firm to their traditional notions of war and politics as male domains.”\textsuperscript{74} Gentlemanly conduct of American GIs toward Japanese women received considerable coverage in the early months of the occupation, while little mention is made of what courtesies were extended (or withheld from) men among the occupied population. Wartime depictions of the monolithic “other” were ultimately beneficial in this postwar focus on “feminine” Japan as comparatively innocent. Japanese men were almost exclusively depicted in active roles in Japan's military expansion in films such as \textit{Know Your Enemy—Japan} and other American wartime propaganda. Women and children, in their turn, were often depicted as followers of the Emperor’s edicts and misled by the “military clique,” thereby becoming misguided victims of male Japanese

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\textsuperscript{71} Personal analysis.
\textsuperscript{72} Shibusawa, \textit{America's Geisha Ally}, 20.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, 19.
\textsuperscript{74} Rohrer, \textit{From Demons to Dependents}, 71.
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ambitions rather than participants in the slaughter of war. Though likely unintentional, the focus on warfare as a male enterprise in conjunction with depictions of Japanese men as bearing sole responsibility for Japan's conduct throughout the war rendered this metamorphosis of female imagery all the more plausible to Americans in the immediate postwar.

Touristic views of Japan were taken advantage of in this instance, tapping into both newfound and rediscovered interest in the Japanese landscape and culture, and efforts were made to focus these energies toward feminine Japanese imagery. Despite their scarcity in the cities where most servicemen were based (they had been traded in the countryside for food), images of women in colorful kimonos dominated in travelogues and pictorials of the early occupation, all the while overlooking or avoiding attention to the unflattering *monpe* pantaloons and less flamboyant Japanese garb that most women wore. Encouragement of “feminine” Japan as a voyeur's delight could then be channeled into a desire to protect these things of beauty from “corrupting influences,” namely Communism. A sense of fragility characterized such depictions, resulting in a delicate Japan to be protected both from the Soviet Union and itself.

Feminine imagery often merged with other perceptions of the nature of U.S.-Japan relations in the postwar, namely that of master-servant embodied in both actual domestic service for occupation personnel by Japanese women in particular and Japan's new role as direct subordinate to the United States in international affairs. Noel Busch remarked early in the occupation that Japan's acceptance of American authority and participation in interactions governed by this “master-servant” paradigm were the chief reason for why the occupier and occupied got along as well as they did. Japanese civilians were not resentful of this inferior position, he insisted, but are fully “content in the role.” Lucy Crockett, determined to keep her guard up in her first few days in Japan lest she be tricked by the “treacherous Japanese” she had heard so much about, admitted that her views changed entirely when a

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75 Sibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally*, 27.
77 Busch, *Fallen Sun*, 25.
Japanese maid brought her a bouquet of flowers as a present to welcome her to Japan. Of utmost importance in this event, however, was that the woman in question was engaged in domestic service to the conqueror. As both literal and figurative servant to the American occupation forces, the association of Japan's servitude of America with Japanese femininity aided in disarming Americans with redemptive qualities of Japanese female supplication. “Japanese women, especially those in service positions, seemed to redeem their people in the eyes of many Americans,” writes historian Naoko Shibusawa, and “the supposed servility and hyper-femininity of Japanese women facilitated American amity toward an enemy race” by redefining them in terms of a clearly hierarchical relationship. Assurances to Americans that “soon they [the Japanese] will be doing the troops laundry,” a feminine task in contemporary American and Japanese gender norms alike, provided a convincing image of a Japan whose people performed the equivalent of domestic housework in the United States for personnel stationed in Japan. These relationships were seldom seen in an exploitative light, and were most often viewed as mutually beneficial. Whether these renderings were of an immature or a feminine, delicate Japan, a role was created for America in either case: teacher to the child, protector of the woman. As Shibusawa writes, “by learning to cope with the hated racial enemy–in the agreeable form of women and children–[Americans] believed they were equipping themselves to be better world leaders.” Accepting stewardship over a nation of women and children and encouraging this hierarchical relationship was not domineering on the part of the United States, the logic went, but simply one of many steps that America must take in becoming a leader in the new world order to be built from the ashes of the last devastating global conflict.

78 Crockett, *Popcorn on the Ginza*, 16-17.
80 “GI is Civilizing the Jap.”
III

Pet, Pupil, Patient: Wartime Images in Postwar Contexts

“Feudalistic Mass Mentality”: New Roles for Old Perceptions of Japan

For all of her claims that those who witnessed Japan firsthand would recount “rhapsodic” tales to their friends and kin in America, Lucy Crockett's *Popcorn on the Ginza* was not so rhapsodic in its assertions. Lavishing praise on Japan primarily for what she saw as a ready and willing adoption of master-servant roles, Crockett's “observations” insist this was steeped in a subservience characteristic of the Japanese people as a whole. “Daily contact with people who are, for whatever reason, obedient, silent, and well behaved tends to dispel the distrust we may once have felt in our abstract concept of them as an inhuman enemy,” wrote Crockett. Dispel much of the hatred it did; to Crockett and most Americans, this was a more reassuring “continuity” with prewar Japan. As a result, wartime renderings of the Japanese as a herd were not eroded, but reconstituted in a more palatable form. The most powerful American images of Japan during wartime often underwent such transformations, and the migration of assumed “traits” of the Japanese as a people from one context to another resulted in a relocation, rather than a disappearance, of older American visions of Japan. As historian John Dower writes, “the war hates and race hates did not go away; rather, they went elsewhere.”

Japanese efforts at making sense of their postwar world allowed little room in many American accounts for the disorientation one might feel were their country undergoing sweeping changes to its fundamental social structure. Observing a concerted effort on the part of most Japanese civilians to come to grips with occupation reforms, Crockett nevertheless insisted that this would prove a monumental task because concepts such as democracy “run contrary to every one of his deeply

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83 The title and theme of this chapter are heavily indebted to the concluding chapter of John Dower's *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War.*
84 Crockett, *Popcorn on the Ginza*, 16.
ingrained feudal instincts.” Insisting that the Japanese people were still governed by a “feudalistic mass mentality,” Crockett stuck to prewar and wartime depictions of a one-dimensional Japan unable to break away from group thought and authoritarian power structures. Despite the war coming to an end, she wrote, this had not changed. “Militant fanaticism” was simply “replaced in their one-track minds with a plodding desire to make the most out of defeat.” Though many American journalists observed

Photograph of Japanese policeman conducting traffic, watched by (and following the lead of) an American soldier. Depictions of Japanese people obeying America's lead at even the lowest levels of authority, such as traffic enforcement, were powerful reassurances of American authority in Japan. Source: Life, 2 December 1946, p. 106.

an enthusiastic effort at building democratic institutions among Japanese civilians, most such reports opined that the reason for this willingness was that Japan was simply playing “follow the leader” again, this time under American aegis.

Notions of a Japanese “mass mentality,” of subdued importance in the immediate postwar, took on new significance and embodied new dangers to Americans as tensions increased with the Soviet Union in Europe and Asia. That Communism might be well suited to the “authoritarian family pattern” of Japan dominated the writings of alarmists, fearing that Japan's “mass mentality” might be exploited by Russian influences to America's detriment. The terrifying prospect of the “hordes of Asia” became all the more acute to many Americans when Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist forces were routed

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87 Ibid, 3-4.
89 Busch, “Report on Japan.”
from the Chinese mainland by Mao Zedong's Communist forces and that country, which Washington had hoped would lead a postwar, non-Communist Asia, was lost to American strategic planners. Japan's masses were then to be harnessed as best the United States could, many journalists opined, and the boldest of these suggested that Japan might be rearmed to stem the “Red tide” sweeping over Asia. Discussions in favor of rearmament were couched in terms of subordinating any Japanese force to the United States, which many proponents felt would be eased by a presumed Japanese deference to the strongest party. America must become the father in the Japanese family pattern, and Japan's “authoritarian family pattern,” though not without its dangers, was now a strength considering the circumstances.

The “Oriental mind,” in particular the Japanese psyche, was still considered a thing of wonder and inherently different from Euro-American peoples. Lucy Crockett considered the thought process of Japanese people no less “mystifying” than when she had first come to Japan. “Trying to figure out the Japanese mind is a favorite parlor game in Occupation circles,” she wrote, “but few of us get much further than noting differences that to us make the Nipponese a highly quaint and comical people. “90 The persistence of a sense of mystery as to what went on in Japanese heads, which fed on its own

90 Ibid, 238.
exaggerations and oversimplifications, also perpetuated a lingering distrust of the Japanese people that found something amiss about the politeness of the Japanese people toward the American occupiers. Quoting a Military Government section officer, Crockett mused that “if we don't watch out, the Japs will bow us right out of the country.” Skepticism of Japanese sincerity continued throughout the occupation for many Americans, convinced that the “Japanese mind” remained impenetrable for the “Occidental” observer and their true intentions difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain.

The Chrysanthemum, the Sword, and the Mirror: Studies on Japanese Culture in the Early Postwar

Americans who sought insight into the “Japanese mind” quickly turned to Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* after its publication in 1946. Tasked by the Office of War Information during the war with conducting studies on Japanese culture and the “Japanese psyche” to better combat America's enemy in the Pacific, Benedict's studies were published after the Japan's defeat as a book for mass consumption, and was the first major tract on Japanese culture to reach a popular audience in America. The fact that Benedict had not been a “Japanologist” prior to her project in 1944 did not seem to bother most Americans or lead to much criticism of her work at the time. Americans in 1946 thought nothing of it (if they knew at all), because it confirmed much of what they wanted to hear about Japan. Though striving to debunk many of the racist views Americans held towards Japanese people, Benedict's work unwittingly confirmed many of them by highlighting a lack of “individuality” and “democratic” values among her subjects. That these were primarily Japanese males living in America did not receive mention in her book.

In a coup de grace against her own arguments against claims that some demonic “national trait” was at the heart of Japan's military expansion throughout the Pacific, Benedict concluded that

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91 Ibid, 25-27.
93 Ibid, 188-89.
94 Ibid, 177-78.
“problems in the Japanese national character” were the chief causes of Japan's entry into war with Europe, the United States, and the rest of Asia.\(^{96}\) Many external factors in Japan's rupture with the “West,” such as the United States' restrictive immigration policies and inherently unequal international system which would not admit Japan as anything more than an “honorary white nation,” were given little if any attention. Instead, Japan's war with America and the Europe's colonial powers was portrayed by Benedict as an attempt to overthrow a system which she saw as entirely balanced and fair. The Japanese people were, in Benedict's framework, governed by undesirable tendencies that must be rooted out, but could be. Hope that the Japanese could “change” was based on the assumption that national rather than racial characteristics defined Japanese society, and needed to be changed. By confirming that Japanese civilians were governed by these shared aversions to democracy and individualism but rendering them the product of nurture rather than nature, Benedict blended hope for change with the assertion that those characteristics which had so colored wartime views of Japan were in fact real. Japanese culture was to be understood, but on American terms and only so as to “fix” its various neuroses and find ways in which to reshape it in the United States' image.

_The Chrysanthemum and the Sword_ also contributed to a focus on feminine images of Japan, but not by casting its gaze on _geisha_ and symbols of Japanese femininity: Benedict's approach was based on the emasculation of the Japanese male. Reinforcing a masculine yet un-masculine image of Japan, Benedict borrowed an earlier Japanologist's insistence that Japanese culture must be viewed through its male members, and her analysis drew overwhelmingly from letters and interviews of Japanese men to the near exclusion of women.\(^{97}\) Identifying democracy and individuality as inherently masculine concepts, Benedict's assertion that the Japanese people, in particular Japanese men, lacked them reconstructed the entire nation not as feminine in the delicate sense stressed by contemporary reportage but in an emasculated form. Japanese men were not “manly” enough because they had not

\(^{96}\) Shibusawa, _America’s Geisha Ally_, 61.

\(^{97}\) Ibid, 183.
subscribed to American-style democracy.\footnote{Yoshihara, 178-79.} Old notions of Japan as counter to everything quintessentially “American,” namely democracy and individualism, were played on in new ways. Undemocratic authoritarianism became deference to the strongest authority (a double-edged sword, since that would put Japan on the fence between Soviet and American alignment); herd mentality became passive femininity, or more appropriately an absence of masculine characteristics. Contrasted with images of American masculinity, postwar Japan was rendered as nonthreatening because it failed to match America in its virility. Feminine Japan was not a delicate people in need of protection; it was marked by masculine shortcomings and inability to fulfill its manly duties of democratic individualism.

Contemporary to Benedict's famous work was a book by a Helen Mears, \textit{Mirror for Americans: Japan}. As the title suggests, Japan's actions in war, though not justified, could be qualified and, when held against American actions in the Pacific, did not leave the United States with a clear moral high ground. Comparing Japan's rampage through the Philippines to American terror bombing of the Japanese islands and the use of the atomic bombs when the war was all but won, Mears found the actions of both parties equally heinous.\footnote{Mears, \textit{Mirror for Americans: Japan}. 22.} Japanese appeals to the rest of Asia for its Co-Prosperity Sphere, Mears wrote, though hollow resonated with their peoples for a reason: Euro-American expansion into the Pacific was exploitative and gave many nations genuine cause for resentment of the world order which Japan sought to alter (albeit to its own advantage).\footnote{Ibid, 19.} The Tokyo Tribunals were an exercise in victor's justice, she continued, and SCAP censorship of the proceedings did little to bolster American claims to stewardship of due process and fair play.\footnote{Ibid, 21.} Vague parameters in the Potsdam Declaration's call to destroy Japan's “will to war” came under fire in her book for potentially allowing the destruction of anything that SCAP deemed “militaristic.”\footnote{Ibid, 53.} Americans had a laundry list of issues in its conduct in war and peace that it must attend to, she wrote, lest the United States “be handicapped
by our failure to illustrate our own ideals in our own practice.”

Mears did not argue for Japan's ablution; nearly every example of American misconduct presented in her book is set against a similar or equally reprehensible act on Japan's part (hence, the mirror). Many Americans did not see it this way, however, and her book quickly came under fire. The *New York Times'* review of her book sharply criticized Mears for, among other things, equating American wartime conduct with that of the Japanese. The reviewer lambasted her work as an attempt “to convince most Americans that Japan has been more sinned against than sinning over the last four years. That just doesn't make sense. And it isn't so.” Her rejoinder insisted that the aim of her book was not to assert that America bore the majority of blame for the war in the Pacific, but to encourage Americans to think of war and its root causes beyond the one-dimensional portrayals of “us and them,” namely America as the hero and its enemies as invariably villains. This was necessary, she wrote, in ensuring the success of the occupation: “To denounce Japan is easy. Denouncing the Japanese today, however, will not get us anywhere in our desire to work out a sane foreign policy in the Far East.”

Her reviewer's response was an exercise in victor's history, that Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor had nothing to do with the United States' embargoes on Japan from the late 1930s, and that her comparative work, in actuality ahead of its time in candid admittance of the more problematic aspects of American foreign policy, failed to shed “much light on the question of Japan or the Far East.”

Unlike Benedict, Mears had spent considerable time in Japan and engaged in extensive on-the-ground research, yet her work was ill-received by the American public. Implications of Japanese faults in her book would have resonated well with American audiences, but her assertion that Japan was not America's tyrannical and neurotic opposite but a mirror through which to better understand itself was an unacceptable claim. Benedict's book was a resounding success in America not because it was a

103 Ibid, 36.
106 Ibid.
“well-researched” treatise on Japanese culture, but because it confirmed that which many Americans wished to believe about Japan: that it was neurotic, weak vis-a-vis America, and developmentally behind the United States in social and governmental structures. Mears' work was censored by SCAP, while Benedict's was circulated widely in Japan, where it became a best-seller in Japanese translation. *Mirror for Americans* remains out of print, whereas Benedict's work, in addition to multiple editions over the years, has most recently been published in a sixtieth anniversary commemorative edition.108 The opinions and observations of Japan experts were not what mattered in appealing to most Americans in the early postwar; what mattered was that the “expert” confirm what Americans “knew” about Japan, and reaffirm American superiority and its global civilizing mission.

**On Pets and Primates: Monolithic Others and Monkey Men in the Postwar**

Why, then, were wartime depictions of Japan so easily commuted to vastly different ends and deployed in new ways after the Japanese surrender? Essential to this, writes John Dower, was the “free-flowing quality” of depictions of the Japanese enemy during wartime and the identification of the enemy as a monolithic “other” in American propaganda, film, and literature. With an enemy painted with broad strokes during the conflict, the groundwork had been laid for both the transfer of this martial hatred to new threats in the postwar, namely Communism,109 and selective remembrance of who was to blame for Japan's war with the colonial powers and its Asian neighbors. The same “qualities” that had been so vilified during wartime could now be rendered as those of a nation ripe for pruning by American hands.

It was not by debunking notions of the Japanese as collectively neurotic that perceptions of Japan more believable to Americans were created but rather the assertion that there remained a condition to be cured that the Japanese populace was transformed from, in Dower's words, “madman”

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108 Ibid, 63.
to “patient”:**

“The perception of the Japanese as collectively neurotic, or in some way mentally and emotionally unstable, also evoked a conspicuously different response than it did in war. The sick Other now became not an ominous threat but a troubled patient, and the victors unhesitatingly assumed the role of analyst and healer […] In a time of peace, in a word, the extremely negative wartime images of the Japanese as primitives, children, and madmen summoned forth the victor's more charitable side; as civilized mentor, parent, doctor, therapist—and possessor, without question, of superior power.”

America could thus switch roles from defender of the international system to surgeon, performing the delicate operation of excising from Japan from the cancerous madness that had driven it to war. In keeping alive wartime claims that Japan was a sick and troubled nation, Americans were yet able to drastically alter the implications of that “illness” to the American public. Repulsing and reversing the madman's (Japan's) expanse was counted as an American triumph, and now that it lay sequestered in the asylum, as it were, Japanese “madness” could be contained and cured. Both, it seemed, required American idealism and moral righteousness to complete the task. Preserving this image in wartime had lent legitimation to the American war with Japan; safeguarding it in peace gave support to the United States' international mission in the postwar world.

More benign but equally denigrating images also rose out of prewar and wartime depictions, particularly those of the Japanese as monkeys or lesser humans. Images of “Jap gorillas” or monkeys swinging from trees in the jungle were common caricatures of the Japanese army prior to and during the conflict, and “yellow apes” was as common an epithet for people of Japanese descent as any. These monkeys could be sneaky, miniature simians or massive gorillas depending upon the stage of the war (and how well the Japanese army was doing). After the surrender, however, this image was recycled in a vastly different way: as the subdued pet. The September 1945 cover of American Marine magazine *Leatherneck* showed a marine laughing as a disgruntled but diminutive Japanese monkey sat perched on his shoulder. The Japanese soldier was still a monkey, but now on an American leash.

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11 Ibid, 304-5.
13 Ibid, 302.
Fierce gorillas were diminutive simians once again in the American imagination.
PART II: LOVE, LUST, AND WAR BRIDES
VI

Madame Butterfly Redux: Fear, Fascination, and Japanese Women

“A Geisha She Is Not”: Overturning Images of Japanese Women as “Geisha,” Prostitutes, and “Madama Butterfly”s

For many Americans, and indeed for much of the European world, images of Puccini’s Madama Butterfly colored perceptions of Japanese women before and after the second World War. In the tragic early 20th century opera, the titular Madame Butterfly falls in love with and marries Lieutenant Pinkerton, a U.S. naval officer with whom she has a child. Faithful to her husband, she awaits his return even after he has relocated to America. Eventually she is abandoned by Pinkerton, who marries an American woman and returns to Japan to bring their half-Japanese love child home with him. Butterfly leaves the child in the care of a friend, and, kissing her child farewell, goes behind a screen in her home to commit suicide. This beautiful but tragic character came to embody both American-held images of a subdued and admirable Japanese female, while confirming that such affairs between American and Japanese lovers were, in addition to being taboo, doomed to end in tragedy. The opera reflected the widely held consensus that liaisons such as these were unthinkable for many Americans, or at least something that social conventions and public pressure made clear that they should not pursue seriously.114

As American troops poured into Japan to begin the occupation, however, fears that these young men might find themselves in the arms of Japanese women, thereby transgressing American (and Japanese) racial taboos, quickly emerged in popular media outlets and letters to editors. One writer in the New York Times Magazine based his suggestions for a smaller occupation force not on budgetary factors, but on the need to keep American men from becoming romantically involved with Japanese

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114 One need only read a small sample of the wide array of articles covering Japan to discover countless mentions of “Madama Butterfly” as interchangeable with the average Japanese woman, indicative of the persistence of Puccini’s portrait of Japanese women and the American association of it with the entirety of the female population of Japan.
women. The 500,000 man force allotted for the initial occupation, he wrote, would invariably lead to more sexual and romantic relationships between servicemen and Japanese women. “Our soldiers will get lonesome,” the author cautioned, “and there will doubtless be many a friendly Miss Japan only too ready to console [them].” For this writer and many concerned Americans, more pressing than the matter of keeping the Japanese in line was to keep Japanese women from tempting American men.

These fears were met with a flood of assurances from journalists and readers who, conservative on this issue at the very least, expressed faith in the ability of American soldiers to resist such temptations, or even a total lack attraction for women of “another race” at all. Typically sympathetic to Japanese people, Saturday Evening Post contributor William Worden nevertheless reassured the magazine's readers in December of 1945 that “Madame Butterfly legend notwithstanding, the average Jap woman—like their food and houses—holds little attraction for the average G.I.” Life writer Noel Busch countered images of the beautiful Madame Butterfly with his assertion that Japanese women “fail to match domestic beauty standards,” and would therefore hold no appeal to American soldiers.

Lt. General Robert Eichelberger, champion of non-fraternization throughout the occupation, was unwavering in his claims that “public displays of affection” between American soldiers and Japanese women, even something so simple as hand holding, was “equally repugnant to Americans at home and to those in the occupation areas as well as to most Japanese,” and that American soldiers would be equally repulsed by such a sight.

Yet date, mate, and marry they did. A December 1945 pictorial in Life magazine, “Life in Tokyo,” prominently displayed over a dozen pictures of GIs and Japanese women on dates in Hibiya Park in Tokyo, and none of them appeared to find holding the hand of the other so “repugnant” as Eichelberger had claimed. Often in the absence of a common language, dates were arranged

118 As quoted in Rohrer, Scott R. From Demons to Dependents: American-Japanese Social Relations During the Occupation, 1945-1952. 44.
119 “Life in Tokyo.” Life. 3 December 1945. Hibiya Park quickly became a rendezvous point for GI-Japanese couples in
(chaperoned or otherwise) and relationships ranging from moments of passion to matrimony blossomed across the country. With many Japanese men of marrying age still abroad in the early months of the occupation, this shortage of candidates for women nearing or already having reached the typical age of marriage in Japan coalesced with an abundance of American youth abroad for the first time and, much like the Japanese women with whom they consorted, reaching a “normal” marrying age by American standards. One crucial point of contact that inevitably facilitated these relationships was the employment of many Japanese women in the occupation administration, one of the few avenues of employment other than prostitution readily available to Japanese women in the early occupation years and the place where many romances between American servicemen and Japanese women began. The “adoption” of a GI into a Japanese family, particularly those with unmarried daughters, could also provide an avenue through which American soldiers might become romantically involved with a young lady of Japan. Whether workmates, chance acquaintances, or “adopted” family members, the channels through which American men came into contact with Japanese women were too diffuse for any attempts to curtail or control them to succeed entirely. Such attempts were still made and opposition to

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Rohrer, *From Demons to Dependents*, Chapter 4.

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Scenes such as this, of an American GI and Japanese woman out on a date in Tokyo's Hibiya Park, became a common one within months of the occupation setting up in that city. Source: *Life*, 3 December 1945, p. 109.
such relationships would continue throughout the occupation and beyond, but the points of contact
were too numerous for even the most die-hard opponents of miscegenation to keep in check.

Reasons for such relationships were as diverse as the avenues of contact through which they
came about. For many young Japanese women, tasked with contributing to the family income or even
becoming the sole breadwinner in the due to the death of a father or brothers, relationships with
American men meant economic security in highly uncertain times. With the relative wealth many
occupation personnel now possessed out of all proportion to what was available to them in America and
their access to American PXs (Postal Exchanges), which sold an abundance of goods that had become
rarities even on the Japanese black market, such relationships could prove economically expedient.
The resultant circumstances, as sociologist Paul Spickard writes, put “young men far from home,
possessing the power and status of conquerors” wherein they “encountered women who badly needed a
square meal” and would disregard racial boundaries in the pursuit of basic sustenance. In these
instances, both gaining reliable support for daily necessities (for Japanese women) as well as the
chance to act in the role of provider (for American men) were alluring to many would-be couples.
Sometimes, love would simply be a nice side benefit, if it came at all.

Other relationships were purely based on sexual impulses and were little more than a business
transaction, often manifested in the form of prostitute-patron relationships or “butterflies,” women who
flitted from one GI to another, reaping the benefits of GI salaries and PX access all the while. Many
Japanese women, either away from home or burdened with supporting their families, turned to
prostitution as a secure source of income, with many customers ready to buy their companionship. For
other women, it was one of a few scarce options for supporting oneself “without becoming dependent
on an individual American who might be transferred home at any time.” These panpan, as they came
to be known, became associated by some early observers and watchdogs guarding against violations of

122 For a detailed investigation of “butterflies,” “onlys,” and other romantic relationships between Americans and Japanese
in occupation Japan, see Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, Chapter 4.
123 Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, Chapter 4; Rohrer, 120.
“Anglo-Saxon purity” with all GI-Japanese relations. While this was by no means the case, and thousands of more “legitimate” relationships were formed throughout the period, the association stuck for many Americans. As historian John Dower so aptly puts it, “every Japanese woman, in a word, was potentially a whore.” Assuming that Japanese women who consorted with GIs were prostitutes often worked both ways, with committed couples sometimes being mistaken for a “vendor” and client by superior officers or, in the case of the future Setsuko Ambern, being called a panpan by a hostile Japanese passerby as she walked down the street with her American boyfriend.

Not all casual relationships were restricted to prostitute-patron or purely sexual arrangements, and both GIs and Japanese women alike engaged in semi-committed relationships, sometimes with the mutual understanding that their partner might have other “babysans” (to borrow cartoonist Bill Hume's term) or GIs respectively. GIs gave such women the euphemistic moniker of batafurai (“butterfly”) as these women were thought to flit from man to man as a butterfly might travel from flower to flower, pollination metaphors notwithstanding. Relationships did not have to be on track for marriage to be considered exclusive, and women who remained loyal to one GI were known as onrii or onrii wan (“only” or “only one”) for their monogamy. Letters, editorials, and memoirs from those who served in the occupation and either engaged in such relationships or knew someone who did seem to indicate that these relationships were the most common form of long-term GI-Japanese romance.

Attempting to accumulate tallies in one's little black book became a favorite pastime of many GIs serving in Japan, but for many of these men, a serious relationship was a strike against the serviceman guilty of the crime, as it were. The contrast between Bob and “Sarge” Pudniak, two characters in Martin Bronfenberuner's Fusako and the Army: An Episode of Occupation, provide an excellent example of the tensions between those seeking sex and those seeking romance. In this story of the ultimately doomed romance of a meek but well-meaning GI and a young Japanese woman, Bob

124 Dower, Embracing Defeat, 138.
125 Crawford, et. al., Japanese War Brides in America, 115.
126 Ibid, 134
declines “Sarge”’s insistence on spending a night at the brothels in favor of spending an evening with Fusako, a woman he and Bob had met while wandering about the city. Preferring the thought of walking a girl home to that of paying “dirty money at the 'gishi house' [... or stand[ing] in line at the [Prophylactic] Station listening to the dirty reminiscences,” Bob immediately comes under fire from Pudniak. Against pressure from his peers discouraging serious relationships with Japanese women, Bob found himself needing to deny that their relationship was anything more than sex in order to avoid reproach from members of his company. “While the accumulation of 'pieces of tail' was proof of manhood in C Company, falling in love with one, particularly a colored one, more than canceled all the credit.”

Those who did opt for more serious relationships were not always without their support networks, however. Studies conducted in the 1950s revealed that friendships between GI-Japanese couples led to the creation of associations wherein, even after moving to the United States, such couples remained in contact and formed tightly knit groups where possible, namely in large cities such as Chicago with a sizable number of such married couples.

Faced with the possibility of servicemen being transferred home at any time (often as a result of commitment to such relationships), impermanent arrangements were fairly commonplace. Transfers home would sometimes be discussed in advance; in other cases, not spoken of but understood as a possibility; in still others, not brought up with one's partner until, to their surprise, the day had come that the serviceman was to go home. These partings could be bittersweet or unimportant, depending on the depth of commitment or seriousness of either party. Army Nurse Lucy Crockett recalled observing two tearful Japanese women bidding their boyfriends farewell at the train station and asking when they would return. The women received a cutting response: “Come back? Why, when you—Japs bomb Pearl Harbor again, baby, I'll be back!”

Bill Hume's Babysan cartoons imply that the GI was the 127 Bronfenbrunner, Martin. Fusako and the Army: An Episode of Occupation. 36.
128 Ibid, 41.
130 As quoted in Shibusawa, Naoko. America's Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy. 40.
hardest hit by his return to America, and that the ever-adaptive “babysans” of Japan would soon get
over their loss...and move on to new conquests amongst the conquerors.\textsuperscript{131} Reassignment or discharge
did not always mean separation for these couples, however. Bob Feragen and Hisa Tanaka had been
dating for four years when Bob was called home to visit a dying grandmother. Having seen many such
relationships end without a word from the serviceman after his return to America, Hisa hoped for the
best but expected that Bob would abandon her. To her surprise, she received a telegram soon thereafter
from Bob letting her know that he was back in Japan. They were married soon thereafter, and they
moved to Seattle in May 1952.\textsuperscript{132} Army Corporal Louis Ward was able to take his discharge in Japan
for an additional six years in order to stay with his wife-to-be, Fumiko, while they awaited legalization
in the United States of marriages between American and Japanese nationals.\textsuperscript{133}

For many Americans seeking thrills in Japan's famed “geisha houses,” the gross
oversimplification the name promoted and the conflation of geisha with prostitutes brought rude
awakenings to many American soldiers. The “geisha houses” themselves were misnomers, as many
eager young Americans soon found out: the differences between geisha, masterful artists and
entertainers who sold their talents but not their bodies, and prostitutes that wandered the streets or
waited inside the various licensed and unlicensed brothels, became humiliatingly clear. Reporters were
quick to correct these misconceptions, and tales of GIs walking away from geisha more than a little
confused and without sexual gratification riddled early occupation reportage from Japan. “Some of the
boys have made their initial visits to geisha houses and a lot of them came away sadly disillusioned,”
recounted one journalist in September of 1945, “having been under the false impression that a geisha
would satisfy all their demands. In certain cases they can be had for what corresponds in Japan to a gift
of silver-fox fur back home. But they are not prostitutes.”\textsuperscript{134} Bill Hume was careful to differentiate

\begin{footnotes}
\item[132] Crawford, et. al., Japanese War Brides in America, 19-21.
\item[133] Ibid, 9.
\item[134] “Race of Giants Takes Over Japan With Ease of Well-Oiled Machine.” Newsweek. 14 September 1945. As many
Americans soon found out, geisha were not common prostitutes, but trained artists who mastered dance, song, and
conversation through an apprenticeship of several years. This was among many prewar misconceptions that was overturned
\end{footnotes}
between his fictionalized “Babysan” and the geisha or Madame Butterfly, and took pains to point out that the Japanese women who consort with American servicemen were typically not the brocaded, timid, and decorous women depicted in American films and literature. Journalist Noel Busch, for all of his insistence that Japanese women “fail to match [American] domestic beauty standards,” dedicated a small but noteworthy portion of his book, *Fallen Sun*, to one “Honorable Peach Blossom,” a geisha of Shimbashi in Tokyo. Pointing out that girls are not sold into geisha-dom as a form of bondage but most often choose or are chosen to be taken in, Busch praised her poise, grace, restraint, and beauty in ways that were at odds with his assessments of Japanese womanhood elsewhere. “Americans almost always have some mistaken ideas about geisha which must be tactfully corrected,” he continued, a task which he thought the articulate geisha better prepared than presumptuous or naïve Americans.

American perceptions of geisha were among many renditions of the Japanese to undergo drastic changes, and positive images of beautiful but elusive geisha returned to prominence in the postwar. Source: *Newsweek*, 25 January 1954, cover; cover story review of Michener’s *Sayonara*.

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It would be a stretch to say that long-term relationships driven solely by material factors were the norm. Understandably, few records exist of the numbers of prostitutes visited (a number of whom were illegal streetwalkers) and casual flings, as well as other short-term relationships. Many of the more casual and entirely sexual relationships were the result of interest in access to a GI's (relative) wealth on the part of Japanese women and physical comforts and sexual gratification on the part of the GIs, and could therefore take on a more materialistic/sexual quality. The GI was only as good as his money, the Japanese woman only as good as her looks. Japanese women could look for sexual gratification as well, and could capitalize on the sex drives of American soldiers in the pursuit of both personal gratification and material enrichment. Midori Langer, herself a war bride who moved to the United States with her husband, recalled that a great many Japanese women married American servicemen owing to their apparent wealth, expecting the same when they reached America and sorely disappointed when they often found their husbands' socio-economic status to be far lower than anticipated. Whether this constituted the majority, however, is another matter. While tapping the GIs relative wealth in occupied Japan would surely have proven an irresistible temptation for many young Japanese women (occupation soldiers enjoyed access to subsidized goods, free housing, meals at military cafeterias, and pay at a conversion rate grossly in favor of the American dollar), it is difficult to say just what ratio of casual and “business” relationships occupied in the sum total of GI-Japanese romances. The documentation for serious relationships that proceeded so far as marriage is considerably more reliable, though even these tend to have been underreported, and do not always account for relationships that were forced apart or consciously abandoned by one or the other party or contain admission of marriage based entirely on money matters. It can, however, be ascertained from the testimony of such couples and from a variety of accounts from the period that steady couples and long-term marriages resulting from such relationships were largely the result of genuine affection and

138 For a more detailed discussion of reported and unreported unions, see Rohrer, *From Demons to Dependents*, Chapters 4, 5, and 10.
love between those involved. Short-term or even certain long-term relationships remained dominated by the moment and were undeniably more numerous, a product of constant troop rotations and varying priorities held by either party. But relationships that endured the many hardships necessary to remain together and eventually reach the United States were typically governed more by mutual affection than by the sole pursuit of material gain.

In the absence of a common language, many couples remained together through intimations, gestures, and unspoken understanding. While one would often attempt to learn the other's language (though usually not both individuals), many relationships went on for months without either individual knowing more than the most basic elements of each other's native tongue. One such couple, Frank Pfeiffer and Sachiko Sekiya, had been dating for months and “communicated only in sign language” throughout that time. Words were not necessary to convey their feelings for one another, and when Frank Pfeiffer pointed Sachiko's heart and then his own, she nodded in agreement, signaling her acceptance of Frank's wordless proposal to marry. They were then wed in a Japanese ceremony attended by Sachiko's family.

Perhaps more stunning than any other reversal of the emotionally charged anti-Japanese rhetoric of the war was the speed with which American soldiers serving in Japan engaged in romantic, sexual, or other close relationships with Japanese women almost immediately after landing on the Japanese home islands. The process worked both ways: many Japanese women had been convinced by wartime propaganda that Americans would violate whatever Japanese women they came across and were possessed of sexual organs so large that they would injure a Japanese female. Much to their surprise, cases of assault or rape were rare, and contrary to the Americans' expectations, Japanese women were not waiting to die fighting them. With the immediate undermining of these mutually held misconceptions, as well as the increasing “feminization” of Japan by many Americans, Japanese women became for the most part divorced from war and its more extreme negative stereotypes. A

return to positive, even admirable images of selfless “Madame Butterfly”’s and newfound renderings of Japanese women as paragons of femininity dominated much of what American males serving in Japan had to say about these women. Portrayals of women wanting to “fulfill their man's every desire” proliferated, be they domesticity and tender care as ideal homemakers or sexual whims as the exotic “Oriental” plaything, no longer sirens but muses who served rather than polluted men's sexual fantasies. By no means were all American men serving in Japan enamored of Japanese women; but by no means did those serviceman who found themselves in the hearts and arms of Japanese ladies in one way, shape, or form constitute a minority. Such men forming the vast majority is not entirely out of the question, as soaring VD rates among soldiers stationed in Japan, factoring in the near-absence of any white or black American female presence there, would indicate.140

Paradoxically, the war that brought the two nations into such close contact that these romantic relationships were now possible on a scale that might never otherwise have happened, though this was certainly neither side's intent. No longer were romances between Japanese women and Euro-American foreigners restricted to figures such as the legendary Okichi, who had given her body to protect the “purity of the Japanese race” by serving as the consort of Townsend Harris, the first American ambassador to Japan after it officially opened diplomatic ties with the United States.141 Now, as many journalists observed, countless GI-Japanese couples could be seen on dates nearly everywhere in Japanese cities and in many rural villages; as many soldiers confided privately and declared openly, many male occupation personnel could be seen leaving the licensed brothels at all hours of the day. Some loved in secret, some openly; couples cohabitated, others lived apart, or lasted no longer than the money in the GI's pocket. Regardless, Americans and Japanese were engaging in physically and emotionally intimate relationships in numbers hitherto unseen, and numbers which have never been duplicated since. Though more an example of an emotional (though no less physical) relationship,

140 For a more detailed discussion of sexual relationships between GIs and Japanese women, brothels, and VD rates, as well as how these spikes in infection were handled by occupation authorities, see Rohrer, From Demons to Dependents, Chapter 4; Dower, Embracing Defeat, Chapter 4.
141 Dower, Embracing Defeat, 126.
such realizations are encapsulated in the romance of Bob and Fusako in Martin Bronfenbrunner's

*Fusako and the Army*:

“On both sides there was a reaction to years of war and war-preparatory propaganda. Fusako had never planned Pearl Harbor or the Death March, and the realization increased Bob's susceptibility to her positive attractions. Babu-San [which Fusako called Bob] had never dropped bombs or gasoline on civilian Tomioka at midnight, and the realization lowered Fusako's resistance and caution.”

By accepting that neither played any role in the savage war between their two countries, the pair were able to quickly overlook what had so recently kept them unable to trust each other's countryfolk. Reckless abandon, matters of the heart, and realizations of a common humanity compelled these young American men, so far from home, to love and live with women who were so recently considered merely another nameless member of the “Jap hordes.” Though the fetishization of Japanese women as sexual objects failed to disappear and purely sexual relationships may well have exceeded more “legitimate” couples in number, the enthusiasm with which GIs pursued sex with Japanese women is stunning when heated wartime propaganda and the moral and legal prohibitions of such relationships in the United States are considered. That tens of thousands of GI-Japanese couples who were to consummate marriages over the next two decades, not to mention the countless others who were for various reasons unable to do so but attempted to all the same, is an even more astounding phenomenon in light of this bitter divide that, fortunately for many, was so quickly forgotten.

Essential to this quick distinction between “mindless Jap” and Japanese woman was the notion of the “liberated” Japanese female, so freed, as occupation logic went, by American hands. The American GI had little trouble finding a lady in Tokyo, opined the author of “Life in Tokyo,” but he was careful to point out that they were neither geisha nor prostitutes, but “ordinary girls who have broken away from family controls.” The GI was therein associated with the liberated Japanese woman, and such relationships the ultimate realization of this newfound freedom for women in Japan to which the author felt that Americans could gladly claim authorship of. While often ignoring

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142 Bronfenbrunner, *Fusako and the Army*, 42.
143 “Life in Tokyo.”
considerable gender inequality in the United States, “liberating” Japanese women from a system which the Americans saw (not without good reason) as oppressive of women became the personal mission of many GIs, whether romantically, sexually, or simply casually involved with Japanese femmes. Many men who sought to legitimize their sexual and romantic relationships with Japanese women “rationalized their own liaisons with Japanese women by claiming to better for them than the women's own countrymen.” Here was another instance of America playing protector and parent all at once by “rescuing” Japanese women from their society's marriage customs\textsuperscript{144} and serving as a final slight of Japan's defeated military regime by liberating its own people.

Remarks praising the “lovely hair and picture-book complexions” of Japanese beauties were almost invariably tied to observations decrying gender inequities in Japan that forced them to “do all the work and carry back-breaking loads and walk humbly behind their men in the street.”\textsuperscript{145} Praise of Japanese women was not only lavished on their looks, but on the burdens that Japanese society often forced them to bear. It should be noted that not all Japanese women were subjected to such rigors, and that such observations could at times border on misunderstanding. Nevertheless, this link between seeing Japanese women as attractive and admirable ladies and in need of saving from these burdens gave crusading fervor to many American servicemen looking for something to love about the girls they so frequently encountered. This transgression of racial boundaries was thus doubly justified to men who ignored these strictures. No longer ugly aliens but creatures of beauty in the eyes of many occupation personnel, these women were considered vulnerable women to be brought them under the protection of American benevolence. It was therefore the duty of American men who viewed themselves as patriarchs in the penultimate society. Not all romances between servicemen and Japanese women were begun under such auspices nor continued with that thinking underlying the affair, but these notions were powerful justifications to those seeking one.

Japanese women were appealing to many men based not only a desire to “rescue” them from

\textsuperscript{144} Shibusawa, \textit{America's Geisha Ally}, 44-45.

“feudal” customs, but in relation to the changing gender landscape in American society. Though the ubiquitous “Rosie the Riveter” was encouraged to return to hearth and home to give way for returning males to reclaim their jobs, gender roles in the United States had already been set on an irreversible course demanding greater accommodation for women in work and social spaces. As such, many American men came to see this “new woman” as overly demanding and selfish. This provided a stark contrast to images of Japanese women then gaining in popularity: that of the gentle, self-sacrificing women who, most importantly, were deferential to men.¹⁴⁶ Women conforming to this image were to many young American men the ideal woman that was fast disappearing in American culture, and Japanese women became paragons of an idealized wife and ideal member of a male-dominated family. Servicemen could be found wishing that American girls might adopt these traits, and as one soldier stationed in Japan put it, “the American girls could take a lesson in respect from the people over here.”¹⁴⁷

At such a high point in American confidence and national pride, for so many American men to identify the women of a former enemy nation as better suited to the American family system and its values is both a perplexing contradiction and an indirect but clear indicator of how males in the United States were reacting to the slow but certain acquisition of social power by women in their own country. Even programs designed to acclimate Japanese brides of U.S. servicemen to life in America were not necessarily designed to further the cause of greater freedoms for women. Red Cross programs to prepare Japanese war brides for life in the United States were not forums for entry into American politics or encouragement of women's independence. Rather, these prepared the women to cook, clean, and sew in the American fashion, as a “good American wife” would be expected to do, much to the chagrin of some of participants hoping for greater personal freedoms from a purely domestic life. Though funneled into lives as simply American instead of Japanese housewives, the women were still being liberated, the logic went, because they were now granted the wonders of American appliances

and other conveniences in carrying out their duties as homemakers.\textsuperscript{148}

Assuming the role of provider for Japanese women was a strong force in changing the views many servicemen held towards Japanese women. Women who were not ostracized for their relationships with American men maintained their relationships with their families, however, which necessitated overhauling one's views of the Japanese wife or girlfriend's family for GIs who found themselves accepted into these kin networks. The scope of responsibility for the “provider” role was in many cases extended toward the other members of the family in such a way as to reinforce images of a Japan to be protected on a larger scale than the emerging imagery of a “feminine” Japan, embodied in and often limited to its young women. By taking on responsibility for the family as a whole, “American men cast themselves as protectors of a people with whom they had recently been at war,”\textsuperscript{149} subtly but surely undermining the ability of many hardened GIs to partition their romantic relationships from the Japanese sense of familial responsibility. Many American men eagerly embraced these relationships, eagerly entering into Japanese family life; others accepted responsibility begrudgingly, if at all, for the children born out of wedlock and the fate of their lovers and their families. The American public, however, did not always share their more enthusiastic soldiers' views. By early 1946 strict anti-fraternization regulations were being imposed on Americans courting Japanese women or buying the services of prostitutes (with varying degrees of success), and many Americans at home scrambled to impose anti-miscegenation legislation already in place in America on these new romances abroad. Efforts to regulate romance in occupied Japan were nearly as strong as the push to enact democratic reforms there, and the battle for whom Americans could and could not love was soon underway.

\textit{Regulating Romance: Non-Fraternization Policies, Domestic Opposition, and Movements to Prohibit GI-Japanese Sexual and Romantic Relationships}

Even some of the staunchest opponents of fraternization (especially that of the most intimate kind) between Americans and Japanese found themselves unable to deny its existence, or presented

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid, 46-47.
\textsuperscript{149} Rohrer, \textit{From Demons to Dependents}, 274.
with clear evidence to the contrary of their assertions that no American could be expected to engage in this. Having cautioned readers so strongly that a smaller occupation force was necessary to avert these relationships, one journalist nevertheless conceded that many American servicemen in Japan were by this time party to a touristic attitude regarding that country and, in addition to eagerly exploring its architecture and countryside, had begun to explore its women with equal gusto.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, as sociologist Paul Spickard writes, these liaisons were pursued by GIs with “a degree of enthusiasm that alarmed their superiors” and left those in charge of overseeing non-fraternization enforcement at a loss as to how to manage them.¹⁵¹ Though he wrote of Japan as a “strange environment” for Americans “where the girls speak gibberish and fail to match domestic beauty standards” in his 1946 book Fallen Sun: A Report on Japan, Noel Busch’s “Report on Japan” article published that same year in Life magazine contained a slew of pictures showing American men and Japanese women enjoying an afternoon on the town.¹⁵² Whether or not Busch was aware of what the photographer would place in the article is unclear, but the documentary contradiction is comical when Busch’s denunciation of GI-Japanese romance is placed next to pictorial narratives of Americans and Japanese clearly enjoying romantic outings together.

Admission of the existence of these relationships did not always breed acceptance, and in many news outlets and literary works not connected to the military, voices of opposition to their existence were as strong as opposition to the mere idea of such affairs. In response to “Life in Tokyo”’s photo coverage of GI-Japanese romances, one woman wrote in a December 24 letter to the editor that she found pictures of GIs kissing Japanese women “absolutely disgusting […] How can they treat these Japanese girls so kindly if they still remember the way other U.S. soldiers were treated by the Japs?” Another reader bemoaned the fact that “first the French, then the Germans, and now the Japanese” have become romantically involved with American servicemen. A final letter pleaded, “Can't some of the

¹⁵⁰ Embree, “How to Treat the Japanese.”
¹⁵² Busch, Noel F. Fallen Sun: A Report on Japan. 18; Busch, “Report on Japan.”
Wacs […] be sent over to entertain our boys?”

A February 1946 report in *Newsweek* recalled an Australian journalists' disgust at the frequency with which he saw American servicemen dating or carousing with Japanese women. “American troops are probably the most immoral in the world,” he fumed, “and to them a girl is simply a girl whether she is white or black or brindle or brown.”

Japanese women were women too, but apparently not the kind with whom good, upstanding American boys should become involved.

GI's with sweethearts at home or those who did not want to be associated with Japanese women would make their opposition to assertions that any GI could fall victim to such romantic temptations clear. One GI wrote to *Time* to protest the appearance of pictures of American servicemen fraternizing with Japanese women in various publications at the time. “Because of the pictures and articles printed in most magazines,” he wrote, “people are beginning to think that we are getting interested [romantically] in the Japanese. Some of them are actually expecting us to bring a Japanese wife home with us. Pictures of G.I.s with their arms around Japanese girls…just don't make sense”

Betraying the incensed GI's assertions that such relationships “just don't make sense,” however, is the expectation, whether teasing or serious, that Americans might bring home a Japanese girl after all. The writer's

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154 “GI Joe: Good or Bad?” *Newsweek.* 11 February 1946. It should be noted that, in the same article, another Australian journalist is quoted in praise of these liaisons, that through them and other informal contacts with the Japanese “has displayed a code which the Japanese still find incredible in a body of troops from an invading army.

suggestion that such assumptions were commonplace does not seem to reveal any accompanying
apprehension on the part of friends and relatives at home about such relationships actually arising.

It is telling that calls to prevent these relationships were grounded not in fears of American
rapacity (MacArthur had assured Americans that the “general aloofness” of his soldiers would preclude
such actions) but in fears of what were perceived as the socially corrosive effects of interracial
romance. Americans were confident that their soldiers stationed in Japan would not succumb to the
rape and pillage that had characterized conquering armies throughout history. The thought that they
might willingly cross the color boundary with a Japanese woman, however, is equally revealing in that,
by worrying that “boys will be boys” and might become entangled with women of another ethnicity,
Americans unwittingly fortified images of Japanese women as simply being women. This unconscious
normalization of the “alien other” and “oriental temptress” as someone that the “aloof” American
soldier might simply see as being on an equal plane with white or black American women in many
ways worked counter to the desired ends of those who pursued its restriction with such vengeance. In
their effort to reinforce the color divide, those fearful of its transgression unwittingly admitted to its
porous nature under the circumstances and allowed that Japanese women might prove equally, if not
more, appealing to American men than women of their ethnic or racial group at home. More than
simply bypassing issues of American racism, GI-Japanese romances were, as historian Scott Rohrer
writes, “remarkable because such associations defied the unequal nature of relations between
Americans and Japanese,” the very master-servant, parent-child relationship that to many Americans
was evidence of America's legitimate role as moral superior to Japan, not social and racial equal.156

Violation of this hierarchy was a fearful prospect for many Americans, but even more threatening was
the possibility that no such American superiority actually existed. Sexual and romantic pursuit of
Japanese women by American men, though often unequal in truth, would often operate in accordance
American gender norms and therefore inclusive of “enemy nationals” of the opposite sex rather than

156 Rohrer, From Demons to Dependents, 27.
maintaining a strict observance of the master-servant, conqueror-conquered paradigm.

Few regulations were in place at the occupation's outset explicitly forbidding GI-Japanese romance and sexual relations, but by early 1946 a flood of earnest attempts to regulate such relationships had begun. On January 21 of that year, SCAP ordered the Japanese government to rescind laws permitting the operation of licensed brothels, to which the occupation government had hitherto given its blessing. Though the officially stated reasons were a spike in venereal disease rates and American domestic opposition to the practice as “undemocratic,” historian Scott Rohrer argues that the move was largely made in response to the pending arrival of dependents of occupation personnel mere days after the ban was scheduled to take effect. 157 The ban issued shortly thereafter on public displays of affections and private sexual relations between servicemen and Japanese women by General Robert Eichelberger, consistently an opponent of GI-Japanese fraternization at all levels, went beyond institutionalized segregation. His regulations implied that Japanese women were in some way “tainted” and would corrupt American GIs, thereby being a threat to the “pure” and “noble” American soldier and the ideals he was purported to represent. 158 Attempts to depict Japanese women as “dirty” worked to deflect various issues arising from these liaisons, such as VD infection rates topping seventy percent in many units, away from American servicemen and onto Japanese women as the cause:

“Both SCAP Public Health and Welfare Section staffers and military chaplains positioned Japanese women as the source of VD, rather than as conduits by which one American might infect others. Documents compiled by each group characterized Occupationaires as clean, innocent, and sexually vulnerable young men in an exotic land which offer[ed] abnormal temptation,' and therefore in danger of having their morals and their health damaged beyond repair without the intercession of countrymen who considered themselves above temptation.” 159

However, with the closure of licensed brothels came the closure of military-run prophylactic stations, followed by soaring rates of infection, much to the consternation of army staff and SCAP officials charged with overseeing enforcement of these policies. As a result, SCAP officials began to randomly subject Japanese women to testing for VD and detainment if suspected of vagrancy or prostitution, with

157 Dower, Embracing Defeat, 130; Rohrer, From Demons to Dependents, 236-37. Some districts were allowed to remain in operation by the Japanese government in tacit understanding though within clearly delineated areas, outside of which enforcement was more diligent; Dower, Embracing Defeat, 132.

158 Schukert, Effrieda Berthiaume and Scibetta, Barbara Smith. War Brides of World War II. 194.
159 Rohrer, From Demons to Dependents, 244.
some held for as many as three days while awaiting test results to disprove VD infection.\footnote{Ibid, 246-47; 250.} That “every Japanese woman […] was potentially a whore” was as prevalent a view in SCAP policymaking circles as ever.\footnote{Dower, \textit{Embracing Defeat}, 138.}

After various abortive attempts to establish such regulations, outright bans of fraternization between occupation personnel and Japanese civilians came into effect in early 1946 along with the outlawing of Japanese government-run brothels (which, it should be mentioned, had been maintained for the exclusive use of occupation personnel).\footnote{Ibid, 130.} Modeled on segregation and anti-miscegenation laws in the United States, these regulations saw much support from the higher echelons of occupation command; “not surprising,” writes historian Scott Rohrer, “considering the well-documented tendency of American military officers to hail disproportionately from the South.”\footnote{Rohrer, \textit{From Demons to Dependents}, 275.} The U.S. Army Adjutant General's office defended these new policies, which were understandably unpopular with many servicemen in Japan, against appeals to legislators for individual marriage laws, often the only course of action available to those seeking U.S.-sanctioned marriage, by arguing that the discrimination such couples might face (particularly in the American South) would restrict the number of locations that the army could station them, thereby preventing them from fulfilling their duties and in conflict with their soldierly duties.\footnote{Ibid, 278-79.  Individual laws for each marriage were necessary to allow servicemen to bring their Japanese wives to the United States, as Japanese immigrants were still barred from the entering the country save for limited-term laws in 1947, and 1951; a permanent quota was not established until 1952.}

Censors in the occupation administration pursued discussions, depictions, and accounts of GI-Japanese romance in the Japanese media with a vengeance, with such references listed outright as one of many “categories of deletions and suppressions,” critical targets of SCAP censorship guidelines.\footnote{Koshiro, Yukiko. \textit{Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan}. 63; Dower, \textit{Embracing Defeat}, 410-11.} Outright admission of the existence of such relationships, compromising as they were seen to be of the image of the American soldier, was not to be tolerated in a Japanese press over which the occupation

\footnote{Ibid, 246-47; 250.}
\footnote{Dower, \textit{Embracing Defeat}, 138.}
\footnote{Ibid, 130.}
\footnote{Rohrer, \textit{From Demons to Dependents}, 275.}
\footnote{Ibid, 278-79.  Individual laws for each marriage were necessary to allow servicemen to bring their Japanese wives to the United States, as Japanese immigrants were still barred from the entering the country save for limited-term laws in 1947, and 1951; a permanent quota was not established until 1952.}
\footnote{Koshiro, Yukiko. \textit{Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan}. 63; Dower, \textit{Embracing Defeat}, 410-11.}
authorities exercised near-total control. Not limiting themselves to white- or black-and-Japanese romances, occupation censors felt the need to suppress information regarding Nisei-Japanese relationships as well, such as when it forced Japanese journalists to remove a story about a Japanese pop idol and her Japanese-American boyfriend. Romantic relationships were not alone as a source of worry for SCAP censors, and attempts to regulate soldiers' sex lives soon surfaced. Following the closure of licensed brothels in Japan, SCAP's ban on public displays of affection between GIs and Japanese dictated that soldiers caught holding hands or engaging in other such subdued displays in public with a Japanese woman were to be fined ten dollars (incidentally, the same fine applied to American soldiers caught having sex with a Japanese prostitute). At the official level, sex and romance were equally dangerous to any number of occupation prerogatives, whether maintaining the “aloofness” of the American soldier, maintaining a clear divide between conqueror and conquered, or preserving a hard-won image of American superiority that acts of intimacy might threaten.

Pressure from the American public to prohibit sexual and romantic relationships between Americans and Japanese civilians resulted in letters of protest written in response to articles that made no effort to hide them. A letter to the editor in the Cincinnati Enquirer in 1952, referring to Japanese war brides, declared it “absolutely criminal to allow interracial marriages to fill this country.” Another irate American admonished readers that “anyone connected with the news knows the low morality among Japanese women” and their apparently duplicitous techniques of tricking good, up-standing American servicemen into marrying them. One woman's objections were so strong that she wrote to both President Harry Truman and her Congressman, begging that they draft a law “to the effect that American servicemen marrying Japanese, Korean, and Chinese women will automatically lose their

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166 Koshiro, Trans-Pacific Racisms, 66.
167 Rohrer, From Demons to Dependents, 257-58.
168 As quoted in Spickard, Mixed Blood, 139-40. Many Americans persisted in the misconception that Japanese women were largely prostitutes, unaware (or choosing to disregard) the fact that when GI-Japanese marriages were permitted, a thorough background check was done to eliminate prostitutes and vagrants. See Schukert and Scibetta, War Brides of World War II, 190; Smith, Janet Wentworth and Worden, William L. “They're Bringing Home Japanese Wives.” Saturday Evening Post. 19 January 1952.
citizenship & be denied re-entry into this country.*169

Attacks on GIs who chose to engaged in committed relationships were especially harsh, and the language of these assaults portrayed men who crossed the color boundary (with the former enemy, no less) as somehow un-American or youth gone astray. For its opponents, romantic engagement with Japanese women became a betrayal of one's American identity and counter to American values; embracing the former enemy was tantamount to nothing less than a rejection of one's own country. Bestowing American benevolence on the defeated Japanese was touted as proof of American moral superiority, yet love of Japanese women was considered mutually exclusive of love of country. Having sex with Japanese women was the result of a good boy being led astray and the fault of Japanese whores and temptresses, but falling in love with their women was a betrayal of his country and culture on the part of the American soldier and something which threatened to destroy the American family. The American way of life should be imparted on the Japanese people so that they might be brought into the United States' new world order, so the thinking went. But bringing them into the American domestic space was unthinkable. The mother-in-law to be of Major Llyod Gruver, the narrator of James Michener's novel Sayonara, sums up these sentiments in her reaction to the happy couple of an American marine and a Japanese girl: “Why, he's a handsome young man […] Probably from a good family. What's he doing with a Japanese girl? […] I simply can't believe it! Yellow girls as mothers of an American home!”170 American values could be opened up to the Japanese, but to allow for the “corruption” of their young men (the sexual impulses of men in their late teens and early twenties seem to have been left out of these equations) and the corrosion of the American domestic space must be abetted and, if necessary, a military-imposed celibacy of a fleet of American girls was the best cure. Obsession with preventing GI-Japanese romance and pleas urging white and black soldiers in Japan not to consort with women outside of their “race” without fail neglected to consider just how few such women were stationed in the occupation. Sparse numbers of WACs served in Japan, especially

*169 Rohrer, From Demons to Dependents, 302.
170 Michener, Sayonara, 23.
when considered in terms of male-to-female ratios, and the few that were there were “reserved” for officers by military regulations. Enlisted men saw highly restricted access to American women at best, and were left with few options allowed by regulation when the opportunity to consort with the opposite sex arose. If followed to the letter, restrictions on the sexual and romantic relationships in which GIs could and could not engage left soldiers in circumstances where, as historian Scott Rohrer writes, “enlisted Occupationaires had virtually no lawful access to the company of women” in occupied Japan.171 One concerned Life reader's petition to send WACs to “entertain our boys”172 would have gone nowhere in “entertaining” American soldiers, as their relations with such women would be strictly monitored by concerned superiors as well as those hoping to take their chances on a little romance of their own with these women officers. Faced with loneliness if they waited until their return to America, “Japanese women thus proved the path of least resistance for American men seeking the company of the fairer sex.”173 Unrealistic expectations of chastity coalesced with the inability of many Americans to understand why any of their brethren might be so foolish as to fall in love with a “Jap girl,” an inability to accept the existence of such couples when faced with them, and fighting an ultimately futile battle to stamp out these budding romances and sexual partnerships.

Marriage was treated with an especially heavy hand by the U.S. military where, if only tacitly, casual relationships and sex with prostitutes were preferred to marriage with a Japanese national.174 “The military's unparalleled ability to create bureaucratic obstacles” served as a major impediment to American-Japanese marriages, even during periods of temporary and permanent legalization.175 Servicemen were required to petition their commanding officer for permission to marry and produce assurances that they could provide for their wife (and children, if any existed). These were but a few

171 Ibid, 269. WACs were considered Lieutenants in the Army, ostensibly with the aim of protecting them from enlisted men (Army regulations strictly prohibited relationships between officers and enlisted personnel), though many historians have argued convincingly that such regulations were also in place to keep these women sequestered as objects of male officers’ romantic advances.
172 Letters to the Editor. Life. 24 December 1945.
173 Rohrer, From Demons to Dependents, 269-70.
174 Spickard, Mixed Blood, 135.
175 Ibid, 133.
among a dizzying series of forms and stages nestled in a maze of paperwork and approvals that many servicemen were unable to take advantage of even in times of temporary legislation permitting marriage.\textsuperscript{176} Gaining the approval of one's CO was seldom easy, if not impossible altogether; responses usually amounted to little more than a “refusal and a lecture on the virtues of Anglo-Saxon purity.”\textsuperscript{177} Even in cases of marriage to half-Japanese women, as with Bill Rogers and the future Hertha Rogers, these women were considered enemy aliens owing to their possessing “Japanese blood.” Despite her being half-German, the two were unable to marry in a ceremony recognized by the United States government and Army officials until the passage of the first temporary law allowing marriages to Japanese nationals in 1947.\textsuperscript{178}

Requests for marriage from a subordinate could be averted entirely by rotating a soldier out of the area, or transferring him to fight in Korea after the outbreak of war there in 1950. Tactics such as these were employed so often than, for all intents and purposes, “in some [military] organizations it was policy of the commanding officer to treat applications for marriage as requests for transfer back to the United States” or, worse, into the intense fighting on the Korean Peninsula. Servicemen hoping to marry their Japanese girlfriends and take responsibility for children they fathered were often relocated to the United States, reassigned to a distant corner of Japan, or sent to other areas such as Western Europe before they could marry or make arrangements for their fiancées and children.\textsuperscript{179} Threats to send a young enlisted man to fight in Korea could be enough to dissuade some from pursuing marriage to a Japanese woman, a tool that was wielding often by officers hostile to GI-Japanese unions.\textsuperscript{180}

Battles between commanders and their men for the ability to marry Japanese women became a prominent theme in occupation literature, with a number of films and novels emerging in an attempt to

\textsuperscript{176} Marriages needed to be completed within 30 days of the legislation coming into effect, a feat nearly impossible for those who were not already well underway with the paperwork, which typically took six weeks to complete. Rohrer, \textit{Demons and Dependents}, 282; Schukert and Scibatta, \textit{War Brides of World War II}, 209.

\textsuperscript{177} Spickard, \textit{Mixed Blood}, 133.

\textsuperscript{178} Schukert and Scibatta, \textit{War Brides of World War II}, 211.

\textsuperscript{179} Ibid, 135.

\textsuperscript{180} Schukert and Scibatta, \textit{War Brides of World War II}, 206; 212.
capture, and often criticize, the racist and white-centric policies barring marriage between American servicemen and Japanese women. Bob, the character in Martin Bronfenbrunner's novella *Fusako and the Army*, decides to marry his girlfriend Fusako when they learn that she is pregnant. When he meets with his CO to request permission to marry, however, the officer explodes: “You want to come over here loving up Tōjō's sister. Who the Hell they going to think won the war? [...] I'm surprised at you, picked man like you [...] Taking up with a monkey bitch.” Refusing to give his consent, Bob's commander refuses to believe that Fusako is anything more than a common whore and proceeds to belittle not only Bob's attempts to marry her but to slander the woman and child for whom he hoped to take responsibility:

“She gets a baby. She says it's yours, and you fall for it. Ain't you never gonna understand these varmints, Hopkins? Half the army had her. Every damn Jap in town had her [...] I told you once, I told you a million times. Treacherous race, two-faced as Hell.”

The officer never had never met Bob before, and never manages to get his name right.

Fusako's enduring loyalty to Bob and refusal of all other American who would cat-call her was entirely lost on Bob's CO, who serves as an archetype for commanding officers in fictional GI-Japanese romances of the time. Virulently racist, these characters invariably transfer their subordinates out of the country to prevent their “picked men” (whom they seldom picked or even knew) from “taking up with a monkey bitch.” These officers are typically depicted as archetypes of the conservative opposition to GI-Japanese marriage and seldom hold any views of the Japanese other than those that prevailed during wartime, in stark contrast to the enlisted men of these works who have embraced the idea of either sexual or romantic relationships with Japanese women. Ultimately Bob's CO refuses, and he is transferred away without time to contact Fusako and tell her where he is going. She is left alone, hoping that he will return someday to marry her and care for their child, though the reader is left to believe that they will never meet again.

James Michener's best-selling 1954 novel *Sayonara*, which begins months before the passage of

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the McCarran-Walter Act permitting marriage between Americans and Japanese nationals in 1952, explored these themes in its fictional romance between the narrator and ace pilot Air Force Major Llyod Gruver, and Japanese theater actress Hana-ogi. The major is entrusted by his unit's chaplain (who is sure that one need only “remember what a fine American girl looks like” to cure themselves of their affections for Japanese women) at the novel's outset with convincing Gruver's subordinate, Joe Kelley, not to pursue marriage to his Japanese girlfriend. Gruver has no sympathy for such hopefuls, lamenting, “In '45 I was fighting the Japs. Now my men are marrying them.”¹⁸² When Kelley informs Gruver that he would rather give up his American citizenship than his fiancée, the major found himself “on the point of knocking him down as an unpatriotic moron.”¹⁸³ How any self-respecting American could love a Japanese girl, thought Gruver, was beyond comprehension: “It had never occurred to me that anyone would actually want to kiss a yellow-skinned Japanese girl. You fought the Japs on Guadalcanal. You organized their country for them in Kobe. But it had never crossed my mind that you kissed them.”¹⁸⁴

After begrudgingly agreeing to serve as witness to the marriage of Joe and his wife, Katsumi, a gradual transformation in Gruver's views towards Japanese women begins. Upon seeing a procession of the famous local theater troupe, the Takarazuka Girls, Gruver is awestruck by one lone actress from among their number and felt as though “I had been brushed across the eyes by some terrible essence of beauty, something whose existence I had never before been aware.”¹⁸⁵ Unsure of how to process his own reaction, Gruver confides in a marine whom he had seen dating an actress from that troupe. “But she's a Japanese girl,” mumbled a confused Gruver; “Drop the adjective,” replied the Marine. “She's a girl.”¹⁸⁶ Before long Gruver falls in love with the troupe's lead actress, Hana-ogi, who at first resists his advances because her father and brother were killed in Allied air raids during the war but eventually

¹⁸³ Ibid, 217.
¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 54. Kobe is a city located in the Kansai region of Japan and close to Kyoto, within an hour and a half by standard trains currently in service.
¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 68.
¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 75.
relents and returns his affections. In the ultimate reversal of the wartime hatreds of both nations, an up-and-coming American Air Force pilot and a Japanese woman who lost her family to American bombs become a couple deeply in love. Living in quarters that would not permit the other to stay (Gruver in his barracks and Hana-ogi in her dormitory), the two sought a place to make love for the first time, and all notions of nationality and war disappeared:

“There was now no thought of Japanese or American. We were timeless human beings without nation or speech or different color. I now understood the answer to the second question that had perplexed me: ‘How can an American who fought the Japanese actually go to bed with a Jap girl?’ The answer was so simple. Nearly half a million of our men had found the simple answer. You find a girl as lovely as Hana-ogi—and she is not Japanese and you are not American.”

Michener's characters overcome charged wartime rhetoric and personal vendetta in the face of mutual affection. The couple become fast friends with Joe and Katsumi Kelly, whom Gruver had so recently condemned, and Joe becomes a guide of sorts for Gruver in this unfamiliar life with his Japanese love.

All good things must come to an end, as the saying goes. Thankfully this does not always hold true; but, unfortunately for Gruver and Hana-ogi, it would dictate the end of their relationship. Leaving his beautiful American fiancée (theirs was an arranged engagement of sorts, putting together the son of one prominent military family with the daughter of another) for Hana-ogi, Gruver was soon tracked down by his fiancée's father and local occupation commander General Webster. Confronting Lloyd who, in a complete transformation from his convictions at the novel's outset is willing to throw away his promising career in the Air Force to remain in Japan with Hana-ogi, Webster attempts to “bring him to his senses”:

“Suppose you do marry this yellow girl […] We don't want officers with yellow wives. And where will you live in America? None of our friends will want you hanging around with a yellow wife. What about your children? Y'can't send half-Jap boys to [West] Point […] I don't want to see a decent American kid like you waste his life […] Strong men have the guts to marry the girl that grew up next door. Such marriages fit into the community. They make the nation strong. Leave it to the poets and painters and people who turn their back on America because they're afraid of it to go chasing after foreign girls.”

Lloyd's intent to marry Hana-ogi, by Webster's reckoning, places his American identity into question as well as his masculine identity as ace pilot. Marriages that would not “fit into the community” were a

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mark of cowardice, not bravery, and one had to “turn their back on America” if they were to love and marry a girl from anywhere else.

Still determined to marry Hana-ogi at all costs, Lloyd proposes to her but is dumbfounded when she refuses. Unable to comprehend why she would refuse a life in America given the chance, she pleads with him to understand that, while she wants to remain with him, she must remain in Japan and he must eventually return to America. Before Lloyd has a chance to resign his post and desert the army, General Webster and the manager of Han-ogi's troupe arrange for her departure to Tokyo. The two tearfully accept their parting as inevitable.

Tragedy strikes the night before Gruver is set to leave Japan and Hana-ogi to depart for Tokyo. An order for Joe Kelly to be transferred out of Japan has been issued, and Kelly is to be forced to leave his pregnant wife behind. Escaping from the guards monitoring him, he runs to his house with Katsumi, where the two commit suicide together. Gruver and Hana-ogi, having heard of Joe's escape and rushing to intercept him before he did anything rash, spot one another in the crowd, but are unable to reach each other. Not wanting her to see the grisly scene, Lloyd waves her away, and the two never meet again. The day of his departure, Gruver hears that a law has finally been passed allowing Americans and Japanese to marry, too late for Joe and Katsumi Kelly, and for he and his Hana-ogi.

At the book's conclusion Gruver is driven to the airport by Webster. His fiancée is waiting for him there, beams the general, and Lloyd looks out over Japan for the last time:

“I had discovered this passionate emotion in Hana-ogi's country and for me—a United States officer bred in patriotism—the crowded fields between Takarazuka and Osaka, the insignificant canals, the tiny house, the tatami mats and the bed roll unfurled at night would forever be one of my homes [...] But even as I said these words I knew that I had to put them out of mind, for I was forced to acknowledge that I live in an age [...] when the only acceptable attitude toward strange lands and people of another color must be not love but fear.”

Defeated, Gruver accepts that his world will not accept a love such as his and Hana-ogi's. Resigning himself to his American fiancée and fast track military career, Lloyd feels empty as he rides away from the life he desired and towards the world which would not allow him his dreams. Gruver was so close
to turning his back on America because it had done the same to him.

Though Michener's *Sayonara* endeavored to portray a “recovering Japan as a 'delicate civilization'”, an effort that “served to ameliorate wartime stereotypes of the Japanese as underhanded aggressors” among the American public through its sympathetic and humanistic portrayals of its Japanese characters,\(^{190}\) it was underscored by another primary objective. Criticism of racism in America and its military being plentiful as it is in the novel, Michener's book was written less as social critique than a sad warning to GIs aspiring to marriage with Japanese women that their loves would end only in pain and failure.\(^ {191}\) A strong advocate of love across racial and cultural boundaries in principle, the author nevertheless feared that the American public was not ready for something so bold, unfamiliar, and frightening to many Americans as the thought of mixed-race children and, as Mrs. Webster put it, “yellow girls as mother of an American home.” *Sayonara* was not alone in this: most love stories of American men and Japanese women during the period contained subtle but caustic critiques of American racism, but more often than not saw its Romeos and Juliets meet with tragedy, if not death. Few such authors advocated the continuation of such arbitrary strictures, and Michener especially did not support the agenda of those who sought to prevent these lovers from marrying one another. But in his literary admonishment to young GI and Japanese lovers, he indirectly confirmed and supported the system which prevented these couples from marrying by assuring them that pain and a sense of loss were all that would await them should they try.

Wariness of GI-Japanese romance as a potential sign of American weakness became another rallying point for those who sought to suppress it. As with the economic and military rehabilitation of Japan, concerns that allowing such relationships might confuse the Japanese as to who won the war appear in letters from those opposed to American-Japanese marriage and served as a constant refrain among the racist commanding officers of GI-Japanese romance stories. Admiring certain qualities of

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\(^{190}\) Hendler, Jane. *Best-Sellers and Their Film Adaptations in Postwar America: From Here to Eternity, Sayonara, Giant, Auntie Mame, Peyton Place*. 89.

the Japanese was not a sign of America wavering, opined Major Gruver's (of \textit{Sayonara}) mother-in-law-to-be; romance between the conqueror and conquered, however, would be a slight to American honor. “It's not that I dislike Japanese,” she lectured Gruver. “Goodness, they're wonderful people. Even in the short time I've been here they've shown me unusual courtesies. But a conquering army must retain its dignity.” Loving the enemy would mean that they were forgiven; forgiving them would mean that they were past the need for reprimand; and a Japan beyond the need for punitive measures would threaten America's position as tutor to Japan and its influence over the defeated enemy. “Losing” American men to Japanese women posed a grave threat to what such circles viewed as core American values, and if these values were ultimately “lost” at the hands of the Japanese, then who had truly won the war after all? The war had been fought and won under slogans entreating Americans to protect the “American way of life,” but all would have been for naught, as those who sought to prevent American-Japanese sex, love, and intermarriage would have it, if Japanese women were able to steal away their “good American boys.”

That regulating fraternization was the chief concern of those spearheading the movement, as historian Scott Rohrer writes, can be taken as an indication of how significant, or insignificant, other issues such as rearmament and economic competition with Japan rated in comparison in the minds of these Americans. Mothers whose sons were serving in the occupation, such as one respondent to a \textit{Saturday Evening Post} article on Japanese war brides coming to America, expressed greater concern that their sons might be “so foolish” as to fall in love with a Japanese girl than a vindictive Japanese ex-soldier might seek vengeance against these young American men. Stories about GIs and Japanese girls on dates or marrying one another elicited more responses on average than commentary on disarmament/rearmament and economic and social policy in occupied Japan. To some, the breakdown of racial barriers was the only great threat America still faced in Japan; to others, it was merely the

192 Michener, \textit{Sayonara}, 34. [emphasis added]
193 Rohrer, \textit{From Demons to Dependents}, 277.
194 Letters to the Editor. \textit{Saturday Evening Post}. 1 March 1952.
greatest of threats among many. In part, this can be attributed to Japan having been disarmed, most of its former soldiers repatriated, and the complete assertion of American control over its islands by the time stories of interracial romance began to surface in American public media. All the same, the ability of these Americans to place control of American and Japanese interactions above the myriad other issues that still faced Japan is revealing in terms of the what Americans viewed as the greatest threats posed by their postwar charge.

Attempting to penetrate to all levels of interaction between occupier and occupied, non-fraternization regulations became chiefly concerned with preventing romantic and sexual relationships from developing between American men serving in the occupation and Japanese women. Discreet sexual relationships could receive tacit approval, but openly romantic couples were faced with much American domestic opposition and a barrage of regulations with the express aim of separating extant couples and preventing others from developing. Young men in a new and unfamiliar land cannot be controlled so easily, however, and for many among their number the desire to preserve their relationships with Japanese women surpassed fears of getting caught. A massive network of rules and controls was hurriedly put in place in the early months of 1946, and almost immediately those servicemen with initiative set about discovering ways to flout this system. Opponents of GI-Japanese sexual and romantic relationships threw down the gauntlet, and many GIs and Japanese women quietly but firmly accepted their challenge.

“Webster: 'Your behavior is a disgrace.'
Bartlett: 'I understand.'
Webster: 'You can't understand, or you wouldn't go lollygagging down a public street holding hands with a Japanese girl.'
Bartlett: 'I understand.'
Webster: 'Damn it all, these people were our enemies a short time ago.'
Bartlett: 'Not me. I fought in Germany.'”

Lover's Revolt: Romance Under Fire and Resistance to Non-Fraternization Regulations

Means of circumventing anti-fraternization regulations were perhaps even more diverse than the regulations themselves, and the rules were flouted as often, if not more frequently, than they were enforced. “Off-limits” areas became little more than a joke or a challenge to many GIs seeking the company of Japanese women. Bob, the unfortunate lover of Fusako in Bronfenbrunner's *Fusako and the Army*, is met with a laugh when he expresses concern about facing reprimand for going to the off-limits “gishi houses” (a mispronunciation of “geisha,” itself a misnomer) of prostitution to which his friend “Sarge” cajoles him into visiting. “Off limits?” Sarge scoffs. “They always are.” Shortly after the promulgation of Eichelberger's regulations, vocal resistance poured forth from enlisted men and even MacArthur, commander of the occupation forces. Within weeks of the enactment of Eichelberger's anti-fraternization regulations, a March 1946 article in *Stars and Stripes*, a newspaper for the American armed forces, admonished readers to “neck in private” to avoid punishment. Widely circulated within the military, this tongue-in-cheek advice to personnel serving in Japan was one of many acts of open defiance to attempts to restrict GI-Japanese romance, and many occupation soldiers engaged in such affairs and serious relationships were quick to retort with criticisms of their own. Letters from SCAP troops “rarely denigrated their peers who associated with Japanese women.

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197 Rohrer, *From Demons to Dependents*, 44.
More frequently, they decried the character and frequency with which American journalists recounted such liaisons.” Sharon


Rogers, leader of an all-female musical group touring with the USO in Japan, saw her derision of romantic involvement between American soldiers and Japanese women met with a month's worth of letters in the Stars and Stripes' Tokyo edition “suggesting she mind her own business.”

Public displays of affection were still met with punishment from by-the-book enforcers, but the threat of reprimand diminished the frequency of American-Japanese romance only slightly, and did little to prevent soldiers from voicing their complaints. As they did not entail a complete separation of Americans and Japanese (which would have been impossible) even at the workplace, one of the primary sites of interaction between occupation personnel and Japanese women remained unaffected, as did the attraction held by countless GIs for the Japanese women they interacted with daily. Those who were sufficiently adventurous, clever, or dedicated found ways to circumvent attempts to keep them from Japanese women, and many did not feel it necessary to do much to conceal their continued association with “enemy nationals” of the opposite sex.

198 Ibid, 263.
Enlisted men outside of the enforcement network were not the only ones to flout these strictures. Many military police personnel (MPs) outside of major metropolitan centers such as Tokyo preferred to save themselves the trouble (and paperwork) involved in upholding anti-fraternization policy “by strategically looking the other way” and not reporting such incidents.\(^{199}\) Walter Gentile, part of the division of SCAP tasked with rebuilding Japanese schools, recalled: “I got written up about 30 times for being in places that were off-limits areas, but when the citations would come into the office, we agreed to tear them up, so no one ever got in trouble.”\(^{200}\) Despite their role as enforcers of these regulations, MPs would often disregard the rules themselves and enjoy the company of Japanese women, even taking them for rides in army jeeps that were ostensibly off-limits to Japanese civilians. Enlisted men violating the rules by visiting houses of prostitution would pass by MPs paying a visit themselves on the way out the door as often as regular enlisted men, as historian of Japanese film Donal Richie recalled.\(^{201}\) Some MPs took advantage of their position to ensure that they would encounter no trouble for their own romantic adventures, or use their job to come into contact with the young women of the occupied nation. William Rodgers, a Lieutenant in the army, concluded a twenty minute lecture to a young Japanese woman about her not having proper travel clearance by asking “business aside, will you have dinner with me tonight?” The future Mrs. Rodgers agreed to meet him that evening.\(^{202}\)

Efforts to keep American men from loving Japanese women had many unintended effects as well, such as indirectly encouraging many servicemen to engage in *particular kinds* of relationships with Japanese women rather than avoiding them. Many monogamous relationships developed, writes historian Scott Rohrer, because of the ban on public displays of affection and the closure of licensed houses of prostitution “circumventing non-fraternization policies with one woman proved easier than meeting and seducing a series of women without getting caught in public raids.” Conversely, others

\(^{199}\) Ibid, 277.
\(^{200}\) Schukert and Scibatta, *War Brides of World War II*, 191.
\(^{201}\) Rohrer, *From Demons to Dependents*, 235.
who faced steep hurdles to openly maintaining a committed relationship flocked to panpan and the more well-hidden brothels instead. Soldiers were corralled into one form of relationship or the other rather than seeing “off-limits” as anything more than a suggestion by their superiors. Such regulations, while successful in deterring many personnel from engaging in the one, be it sex or a committed relationship, simply pushed them into or reinforced the other.

Other pairs of lovers would escape these strictures through whatever means were at their disposal, even if they did not meet with the approval of their families or occupation authorities. One of the more tragic acts of defiance to intolerance of American-Japanese unions came in the double suicide of Private Charles Kinchelow and Koyama Chiyoko, a pair of lovers facing Charles' imminent discharge without being able to bring Chiyako home with him. The pair took their lives shortly before Charles was scheduled to return to America, taking poison in a Shinto shrine and dying together rather than facing a likely permanent separation. The carrying out of this love suicide (a poetic act and vaunted archetype in Japanese literature) in a Shinto shrine, though perhaps not intentional, creates a powerful image. Rather than return home and abandon his Japanese lover, Private Kinchelow's taking his own life under the torii gates, an irrefutable symbol of Japanese culture and Shinto religion, was

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203 Rohrer, From Demons to Dependents, 257-58.
204 Ibid, 283.
205 Torii are gates at the entrance to, and located throughout, Shinto shrines. Though an accurate translation is elusive, the meaning of the word can be thought of as “a resting place for the birds” (the Japanese word for bird, tori, is a close homonym). They are unique to Japan's Shinto tradition, and can be found even in Buddhist temples owing to the greater acceptance of religious fusion in Japan than in many countries dominated by monotheistic religions. Then and today, these gates are intimately associated with Japan by many if not most Americans.
symbolic of a rejection of his American identity, an identity whose arbiters would not accept his love for a Japanese woman and therefore one he no longer considered his own. Faced with a choice between the life in America that champions of anti-fraternization regulations had laid out for him or a life spent with his love until the end, Kinchelow's rejection of America when those claiming to represent it sought to deprive him of his happiness. This was the realization of fears that Japanese women could lead American men away from their home and cause them to reject their identity as citizens of the United States, yet was more the result of American domestic opposition rather than the Japanese women themselves.

Tragic death was not the sole fate awaiting couples. Many more found ways to remain together despite military, government, and public efforts to keep them apart. Couples unable to go together to America often saw the serviceman working as a civilian in Japan following the end of his military service in order to remain with his wife or girlfriend, staying until the time came when they could relocate to the United States. One such serviceman, Louis Ward, took his discharge in Japan for an additional six years in order to stay with his wife Fumiko until law permitted him bring her to America. Others would pursue a life together in Japan if unable to return the husband's native country. Author James Michener, writing in 1951, recalled that during his travels in Japan he would find at least four G.I.-Japanese couples waiting to apply for marriage licenses every time he visited the local office which handled such unions. Upon asking what they would do when they got to the States, many of Michener's queries were met with a simple reply and a grin: “We aren't planning to go back. We intend to live here.” SCAP documentation and memos indicate large numbers of soldiers who seriously contemplated relinquishing their American citizenship in order to remain with their wife, fiancée, or girlfriend. In a way, those who feared that Japanese women might draw American men away were right; little did they realize that their own efforts to prevent these marriages were often the

206 Rohrer, From Demons to Dependents, 285.
207 Crawford, et. al, Japanese War Brides in America, 9.
208 Michener, James A. The Voice of Asia. 18.
209 Schukert and Scibatta, War Brides of World War II, 207.
chief cause. For many an American serviceman who had fallen in love with a Japanese girl, the best way to get him to leave America behind was to inform him that he could not bring his wife there.

When obtaining consent from the “appropriate authorities” for a marriage sanctioned by the American government proved impossible, many couples pursued Buddhist or Shinto ceremonies instead. Parents of Japanese women seeking to marry their American boyfriend who condoned the union would sometimes hold ceremonies themselves, with one father presiding over the Japanese marriage ceremony entirely by himself. The event was a blend of Japanese and American traditions: “the girl's father poured the ceremonial sake into three lacquer cups in turn. That sealed the marriage. That, and a kiss—Western style.”

A mere two month's after Eichelberger's anti-fraternization policy was announced, SCAP ordered the Japanese government to “provide a procedure for the marriage of United States personnel in Japan in accordance with the Japanese civil code.” Many commanders felt pressured into providing some means for their soldiers to marry when faced with the fact that their subordinates might pursue marriages sanctioned by Japanese law if denied permission to marry in an American-sanctioned ceremony. Marrying in whatever way they could had long characterized the more intent GI-Japanese couples throughout the occupation. By the estimate of one writer in Ebony magazine in 1952, “most of the 6,000 GIs who have married Japanese girls since the relaxation of U.S. bans [sic] against it had already been married in Shinto services.” Despite barriers to and in many cases outright prohibition of such marriages, Stars and Stripes' Tokyo Edition began carrying wedding announcements for servicemen and Japanese women, be they under Christian, Shinto, Buddhist, or civil auspices, in 1949. The number of announcements is indicative of how large the numbers of such marriages were even in the face of entrenched bureaucratic and domestic American opposition, all

210 See Rohrer, From Demons to Dependents; Crawford, et. al., Japanese War Brides in America.
211 As quoted in Schukert and Scibetta, War Brides of World War II, 205. This was observed by American journalist Duane Hennesy and reported by him in March of 1946 in American media.
212 As quoted in Rohrer, From Demons to Dependents, 287.
213 Ibid, 289.
215 Rohrer, From Demons to Dependents, 290-91.
the more significant in that these public declarations of American-Japanese marriage were so numerous even when marriages that remained secret are not taken into consideration. In the event that American sanction was not forthcoming, American soldiers were ready to pursue other avenues of consecrating their marriage, even if that meant exchanging a tuxedo, dress, and church for traditional Japanese wedding attire in a shrine or temple.

As the occupation continued and stories of sexual adventures and interracial romance proliferated, tolerance of American-Japanese romances in the American print media grew, and relatively impartial or even positive depictions of these relationships dominated by the end of the 1940s. So long as the women were seen to be acting in “feminine” roles and in deference to their American men, they were accepted by an increasingly sympathetic mass media in the United States that now argued for greater tolerance of these couples and their half-Asian offspring.216 Pictures of happy GI-Japanese couples, whether white and Japanese, black and Japanese, or Japanese-American and Japanese, graced nearly all articles about them. Photographs showed happy couples smiling, embracing, and playing with children; one pictorial in *Ebony* magazine showed a Japanese wife playfully feeding her African-American husband as one might a child.217 Positive coverage was soon accompanied by journalistic and editorial criticisms of the prohibitive policies on intermarriage, as in “Love, Honor & Red Tape,” a *Time* magazine article in 1951 which pitied the plight of servicemen in Japan trying to marry their Japanese girlfriends. Reporting on the trials and tribulations of members of the U.S. Far East Air Force, the writer quipped that for these men, “marriage is more complicated than a bomb sight,” and detailed the trying process a GI and his fiancée need undergo to marry in a ceremony considered legally binding in the U.S. After the laborious process, “if he still has a spark of life left, FEAF's young airman can start off on his honeymoon.”218 The writer's subtle criticism placed SCAP's cumbersome procedures and the failure of Washington to pass comprehensive laws tolerant of

216 Ibid, 300.
these marriages as the greatest obstacle to these aspiring marriages, rather than the cultural or racial differences which opponents had long touted as chief reasons why these couples could not be allowed to marry. Red tape, as the article's title implies, was a greater barrier to the consummation of love between these young paramours than skin color or the society from which they hailed.

Shared experience in dealing with bureaucratic barriers to marriage fast became a source of solidarity among Americans serving in Europe and those in Japan, as both faced institutional opposition to their choices in marriage partners from among the local populace. A letter in response to “Love, Honor & Red Tape” from a soldier fighting in Korea praised the article and its detailed synopsis of the convoluted procedure for securing marriage to a Japanese national, while protesting the refusal of the U.S. government to admit spouses of American soldiers who died in Korea to the United States. This letter was accompanied by a rejoinder to the article from a soldier stationed in Europe, who wrote that “it was good to read that the U.S. soldiers stationed in Germany and Austria are not the only ones who have a hard time getting married to local girls. I see our buddies in Japan have the same trouble.”219 Faced by similar (though not so extreme) hurdles to marrying the women they had fallen in love with overseas, the common experience of institutional pressure against this freedom of choice in marriage allowed soldiers on the European front of the Cold War to commiserate with those on the Asian front. The soldier in Europe did not criticize the choice of his compatriots half the world away in choosing women who were not white, but rather considered their plight to be the same as his own. Whether or not the writer was crossing such “color lines” himself is not clear (there is no indication as to his skin color). What is clear is that soldiers in both theaters were faced with similar attempts to control their personal choices and futures through regulation whom they could and could not marry, producing a backlash in short order and giving cause for those who might not normally condone white- and black-Japanese marriage to do so when their struggles could be identified as one and the same. Shared problems resulted in mutual sympathies among Americans transgressing different lines (the ethnic in

Europe and the racial in Japan), forming a bond between soldiers who had fallen in love with German, French, and British women and those who were intent on marrying ladies of Japanese, Korean, and Chinese extraction.

Eichelberger had been quick to respond to the “problem” of romance between American soldiers and Japanese women on a massive scale, but other elements within SCAP were equally fast in amending untenable attempts at regulation. Realizing the futility of total bans on romantic fraternization between occupation personnel and Japanese civilians, one of Eichelberger's subordinates SCAP responded to his proclamation months earlier by announcing that warnings, rather than arrests and fines as called for in Eichelberger's policy, would be issued to soldiers caught fraternizing with Japanese women. 220 As more and more applications for marriage flooded SCAP offices and further bombarded them during the time frames allotted by temporary legislation, and as soldiers turned in greater numbers to Japanese marriage ceremonies when American ones could not be secured, commanding officers progressively accepted the inevitability of such romances regardless of whatever regulations existed. Restrictions were relaxed, many “off limits” locations were no longer so (though common practice had disproved this assertion long before), and overnight passes away from one's barracks, their purpose obvious, became all too easy to obtain. By the occupation's end, few rules save the Uniform Code of Military Conduct governed the actions of U.S. servicemen in Japan, and as Rohrer points out, this set of guidelines did not restrict marriages consummated with denizens of “friendly nations,” of which Japan would become one with the conclusion of the peace treaty in September of 1951. With hostilities officially brought to a close and the formal end of the occupation rapidly approaching, the U.S. military and government supported measures to ensure that its servicemen taking responsibility for their Japanese wives and dependent children. 221

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220 Ibid, 287.
“American as Apple Pie, Yet Oriental as a Rice Paddy”: Bill Hume's Babysan and the Sexualization of Japanese Women

“She looks Japanese. She looks American. Nice, you think. Incongruous, you think. Sexy, you think. You don't need that next drink to understand that Babysan is a fascinating, delightful creature.”

Bill Hume's fictional Babysan cartoons, his popular series which ran in the local base newspaper Oppaman in Japan beginning in 1951 and quickly gained in popularity among servicemen throughout the country, featured as their subject the titular quick-witted and seductive “Babysan.” A stand-in for the Japanese everygirl of both the onrii and batafurai variety, she dated, bedded with, and captured the imaginations of the various servicemen characters of his comics and the real soldiers they were meant to represent. At times ten steps ahead of her boyfriend and at others confused by the simplest of American things, Babysan was nevertheless equally smart as she was sexy. “Newcomers to the land of Fuji-san will bluntly state that no girl can outwit them. Such a statement confirms the fact that they are either deluded ignoramuses or that they haven't met Babysan.” A pragmatic and quick-on-her-feet individual, Babysan is always aware of her surroundings and, when her boyfriend fails to remember, whether or not he has an overnight pass from base.

By Hume and his characters' reckoning, when compared to American women Babysan would come up short in physical height only. The cartoonist took pains to emphasize his fictional femme as a woman and nothing less; at times, even more of a woman than those back home and possessed of “a heart that seems twice as big as many of her American sisters.” Any discussion of the differences between American and Japanese women, thought Hume and his editor/commentator John Annarino, was purely academic:

“There may have been long, loud and ribald discussion of the difference between girls who happen to live on different sides of an ocean. When you come right down to it there doesn't seem to be enough difference to make

222 Hume and Annarino, Babysan, 10.
223 Ibid, 86.
224 Ibid, 62.
any difference [...] It's what's underneath the skin that counts, and [the serviceman will] quickly proclaim that Babysan is in a class by herself.”

Comparisons of the two were bound to result in a realization that there were more similarities than differences, Hume would say, and what differences did exist were often in Babysan's favor. Japanese women, as embodied by Hume's Babysan, were in his world more attuned to personality than rank and status, and thus more likely to accept a serviceman for who he was rather than in pursuit of her own material advancement.

A source of comfort to soldiers and sailors stationed in Japan, Babysan could play the role of “feminine Japan,” and if Hume's claims are correct, embodied the entire occupation experience for those who enjoyed the company of such a lady. By this token Japan was a voyeur's delight, to be handled and enjoyed and with shortcomings that were entirely forgivable. Absent in Hume's cartoons and Annarino's commentary are any mention of the intense debates on Japanese rearmament, economic

226 Ibid, 28; 84.
rehabilitation, and fears of Communism that dominated much of the discussion of the beaten nation in the American media and the tensions they engendered. Instead, with Babysan as its representative Japan became a world of pleasures of the flesh and place of rest for American soldiers, mind, body, and soul.

This cartoon vixen was a woman caught between two worlds, yet doing quite well for herself as a result. Envoy of Japanese society to the GI, she would introduce her boyfriend to Japanese customs, be they proper use of the kotatsu (charcoal stove) or, in more private settings, “how to put on—and take off—the kimono.” She is depicted wearing American apparel in nearly all of Hume's cartoons, yet she also wears geta (Japanese wooden sandals) without fail and without a break in stride. A seamless blend of Japanese and American culture, Babysan appears all the more calm, cultivated, and in control when juxtaposed with her American paramours who are more often than not depicted as hapless oafs or else unable to keep up with her. Trying “her darndest” to become as Americanized as possible for her serviceman boyfriend, she successfully navigates her own and her lovers' cultures often more deftly than her American boyfriend's feeble attempts at understanding Japanese customs. She is not without fault, and there are times when her actions seem odd or out of place, such as her attempts at “Japanese jitterbuggling, American as apple pie, yet oriental as a rice paddy.”

Knowledgeable of everything American, she is nevertheless often innocent as a child, knowing the arrivals and departures of American ships while unable to differentiate between the names for those ships and American states. With much left to learn, Babysan nevertheless represents both the child to be tutored by America and what the end product of this tutelage would be. “Being democratic is a natural part of Babysan's personality and existence,” thanks to her American boyfriend and the occupation he represents, and her open-mindedness a synthesis of Japanese pragmatism and American idealism. Disarmed yet disarming, innocent yet highly worldly, Hume's Babysan becomes the ideal partner in America's new

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228 Ibid, 24.
229 Ibid, 6.
230 Ibid, 66.
relationship with Japan.

Cultivated and clear-headed though she may be, she is, however, ultimately a sex symbol. Servicemen in Hume's cartoons leer at the Babysans passing by, making clear their intentions to take every opportunity to put their newfound knowledge of “how to put on—and take off—the kimono” to good use. Hume's cartoons, and the accompanying captions by Annarino, emphasize above all her sex appeal:

"She may not have the front upholstery of a Nissho showgirl at the Gekijo Theatre in Tokyo, but she certainly is better than adequate. If she does wear a brassiere it isn't because her firm femininity needs it. It's just another useless article of her adopted occidental apparel. But for sleek curves in the necessary places Babysan's inventory shows a complete stock."\(^{231}\)

Her brains, fiscal sense, and mastery of her world are welcome but essentially secondary characteristics to her physical attractiveness. Striking alluring poses while performing the most mundane of tasks, her

\(^{231}\) Ibid, 114.
boyfriend's eyes are always on what remains hidden under the kimono, as it were.232

Some of Hume's Babysans observe more monogamous relationships; others follow the *batafurai* model and set about returning the affection so many GIs shower her with to each and every one:

“A carefree and charming girl, Babysan never forgot the acts of kindness on the part of the American. She decided, in fact, to devote herself to the cause of the American serviceman in Japan. She would make his stay in the land of cherry blossoms a pleasant one, and—well, the way she figured it—the more GI's the merrier.”233

Flitting from GI to GI did not make her unsavory or unfaithful; it was simply in her nature. While these American servicemen would likely be incensed at an American girlfriend “dating around,” Hume and Annarino indicate that with Babysan, that was just be the way things were. Indeed, things could go both ways: while some GIs might stay with one Japanese girl, maintaining a harem was not a reprehensible offense in Babysan's world. Relationships with Japanese women were therefore fun and fancy free, without the baggage that might accompany such loose relationships in America.

For those able to commit to a more stable relationship, however, Hume's Babysan was the ideal partner. “She expects, naturally enough, to be rewarded for her efforts” to keep her boyfriend happy, but “Babysan is not a gold-digger,” and “even if he didn't bring well-filled packages as tokens of affection she would still love him just as much.”234 Better at managing his finances than the GI himself, Babysans keep their boyfriends from wasting their money and know “of many more practical ways of using his *okane*” (the Japanese word for money) than simply nights out on the town and lavish gifts even for her.235 Patience is one of Babysan's greatest virtues, and she would eagerly await the return of her boyfriend if she knew she could count on him.236 Such relationships were not something to be ashamed of, Hume assured readers; a stable relationship was as respectable if not more than a black book of girls taken to bed, and would meet with approval from Japanese onlookers rather than the

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233 Ibid, 7.
234 Ibid, 32-34.
235 Ibid, 92.
236 Ibid, 38.
consternation promiscuous soldiers might bring upon themselves. Flings were fine, but a stable relationship could be all the more rewarding than a high “kill count.”

Wonderful as it was, romance with a Babysan would ultimately come to an end when the serviceman returned home. They would take care of one another while the American remained in Japan, but with the understanding that when his time in Japan was finished, they must part ways. Though by no means asserting that women in America were not possessed of a beauty all their own, for the time the American was in Japan there remained the simple fact that the lovely “Babysan is here!”

That Babysan was close at hand was an undeniable factor in the GI’s attraction to her, and while Japanese ladies were not necessarily considered to be more beautiful than their American counterparts, the proximity of Japanese women inevitably won out. The reverse would be true once the soldier had returned to the United States; Babysan was caring and beautiful, but she was not, and would never be, there. Though certain that upon returning to America servicemen boyfriends would write letters to their Babysan without fail, only one of Hume's smitten soldiers is seen trying to bring his Babysan home. A loving and delightful companion for the serviceman in Japan, she is notably absent in Hume's collection When We Get Home from Japan, cartoons of servicemen who bring a bevy of Japanese customs into their homes but, with the above noted exception, not a single Japanese woman. Though returned serviceman are invariably altered by their experience in Japan and observe Japanese mannerisms and customs without a second thought (even to the point of finding American customs, such as sitting on chairs rather than the floor, odd), their families are all white women and light-haired children. A Japanese girlfriend will never be forgotten, but will never be seen again either once the GI is at home in the United States. Romance with a Babysan is, in the end, a temporary affair, one in which servicemen should engage without restraint but with an understanding of its inevitable end. That so many of Hume's returning servicemen in When We Get Home from Japan are coming home to wives

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238 Hume and Annarino, Babysan, 10.
239 Ibid, 42.
240 Hume, Bill and Annarino, John. When We Get Home from Japan. 7.
and children, though not explicitly mentioned in Hume or Annarino's commentary, begs the question as to whether or not Babysan is meant to serve as a surrogate wife or an extramarital affair that, like Babysan herself, can be left behind when the serviceman leaves Japan.

Hume's cartoons were so wildly popular for a reason: they resonated with the experiences of so many servicemen stationed in Japan, paralleling (and based on) many of their stories while simultaneously reassuring them that romancing the Babysans of Japan was nothing to be ashamed of. They also assuaged readers of guilt at leaving their Babysans behind, telling them that the young ladies would be able to move on (more easily, perhaps, than the serviceman), and that missing her was only natural but something that the GI would get over. Readers were encouraged to seek the comforts of Japanese women during their stay in Japan, but need not think twice about being unable to bring her home with them. These relationships, though temporary, are presented in Hume's cartoons and Annarino's commentary as mutually beneficial for GI and Babysan alike, and the only cause for regret would be having never enjoyed such a relationship during his service there.

Relationships with Babysans must end someday, Hume and Annarino wrote, but she would leave the serviceman with lessons he would carry forever. Though their relationship lasted only so long as his stay in Japan, she is shown as an envoy of Japanese culture to the occupationaire (to borrow Rohrer's phrase) and introduces him to all that Japan has to offer, and many things that his home country lacks:

“Because of the warm and gracious hospitality of the Japanese people, because of the pleasant peculiarities of the country, because he has found an attitude toward life that brings a serenity unmolested by the vicious hubbub of western ambition, and because of Babysan, he does not find it easy to leave. He will never see her again but he will never forget her. He taught her much but she taught him more […] She brought him a happiness—spiced with an occasional heartache—he had never known before, a happiness that in some ways he never knew could exist. Soon it will be over and for the rest of his life it will seem like a fantastic dream. But it will did happen. He is glad it did.”

Japanese women as embodied by Hume's Babysan are portrayed as a crucial part of warming interpersonal relations between servicemen and the Japanese populace. Tending to his needs, she also

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241 Hume and Annarino, *Babysan*, 120.
helps her serviceman boyfriend to understand Japanese culture and make elements of it his own, unraveling the “mysteries” of her country for him and sending him home with an appreciation of Japan that he will endeavor to communicate to his fellow Americans. Fulfilling both their role as exotic caretaker of the needs of American serviceman and international/intercultural ambassador, Hume's Babysan offered an idealized portrait of Japanese women to GI and American civilian alike while rendering romantic and sexual relationships with Japanese women as wholly acceptable sources of comfort for young men far from home.

Source: Babysan: A Private Look at the Japanese Occupation, p. 123.

Many Babysans could not be brought home for much of the occupation, but that was to change as time passed. As formal barriers to marriage between American servicemen and Japanese women fell one by one, the slow trickle of GI-Japanese couples that had made its way to the United States now became a torrent of thousands every year for the next ten years. Though statistically speaking an uncommon phenomenon, these couples began appearing in numbers hitherto unseen in the United
States and penetrating American society as never before. The American public was now brought face to face with the intermarriage of white and black servicemen with Japanese women. Once attempts to prevent these marriages had proved ultimately futile, Americans who were now coming to grips with a largely unfamiliar social phenomenon moved beyond denial to making sense of it all. The debate had shifted from how to prevent the marriages or sustain opposition to them, to how to integrate these war brides into American society. If efforts to ensure that sons' wives were white could not come to fruition, then the next best thing for those who had fought so hard to prevent this was to ensure that these “yellow mothers of an American home” acted according to contemporary American gender norms. In short, they had to do their best to make these Japanese women white.
VI

“They’re Bringing Home Japanese Wives”: Race, Marriage, and GI-Japanese Couples in America

On January 19, 1952, the *Saturday Evening Post* published an article titled “They’re Bringing Home Japanese Wives,” heralding the transformation of Japanese war brides from fearful prospect to unavoidable reality and something which the American public, like it or not, would now need to accept. Up from James Michener's recollection of four such couples per time he visited the local American consulate in Japan, Smith and Worden counted at least twenty such couples applying for marriage licenses each day when their article was published that same year. With the McCarren-Walter Act legalizing the marriages between American servicemen abroad and whomever they chose as their wife was not to come until the following year, the number of hopefuls for marriage had increased dramatically over the past few years, and through temporary and individual legislation they were now coming to the United States by the boatload. As GI-Japanese couples crossed the Pacific Ocean in droves, it became clear that marriage between American servicemen and Japanese women could not be averted. The issue at hand then came to be how to react to these couples and, eventually, how to ensure that these Japanese women could be made to conform to American family and gender norms.

Smith and Worden assured readers that fears of Japanese brides being met with intolerance and bitter resentment, as many such couples were indeed received, were nevertheless exaggerated. Quoting General James B. Pilcher, Consulate General at Tokyo, the authors informed readers that the Pilcher had attested to receiving few letters objecting to the entry of “Oriental daughter-in-law”s. Quite the

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242 While relationships between Americans and Japanese were not exclusively within the American man-Japanese female pattern, the overwhelming majority fell within this category, and are therefore the focus of this chapter, as well as the broader themes of Japanese women in American literature and public discourse in the postwar era. There were also male-male and female-female relationships between American personnel and Japanese civilians, but were relatively infrequent in comparison and reports were highly suppressed or dismissed. As a result their cultural impact was either avoided in discussion or nearly non-existent, and are therefore not the subject of this chapter.

reverse was true: by his count, the majority of families expressed great interest in meeting “my son's child” (for those with children) and his new wife. Families need not fear that their sons had married prostitutes, the authors wrote, thanks to the “thoroughness of the Army in making international marriages difficult.”\textsuperscript{244} (A common but largely unfounded fear among families whose sons were wed to Japanese girls were that a prostitute had “swindled” their son into marrying her, and that she might take advantage of this to come to the United States.) Perhaps a snipe at the still-strong institutional barriers to intermarriage in the armed services, the authors nevertheless affirmed that those who managed to make it to formal military approval had proceeded through a system that weeded out both “undesirables” such as prostitutes and nearly all but the couples most committed to giving life together in America a try.

The authors' reassurances to readers were, more so than on parental approval (tentative or otherwise), based on the apparent success organizations such as the Red Cross were having in “Americanizing” these brides bound for the United States. Courses in home economics for the war brides were recounted in great detail, and readers were presented with an image of Japanese women

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{Portrayals of Japanese women fulfilling traditional American domestic gender roles were frequent an important in selling the concept of these intermarriages to Americans on the home front. Left: Japanese brides of American servicemen are trained in “Western” baby care. Right: The brides are training in American cooking, here shown making pies. Source: \textit{Saturday Evening Post}, 19 January 1952, pp. 27+.
\label{fig:intermarriages}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{244} Ibid.
eagerly learning American-style cooking, cleaning, sewing, and grooming habits. Women whose husbands could not speak Japanese made concerted efforts to learn the language of what would be their new home, Smith and Worden noted, but those with Japanese-speaking husbands were portrayed as less intent on learning English and blending in fully. Fervent embrace of all that was (or thought to be) American by these brides was prominently displayed as proof that these marriages stood a good chance of survival in the United States, and workers at these Red Cross schools gave increasingly positive prognoses for the ability of their students to become ideal American homemakers. Such efforts to “Americanize” themselves could be taken to the extreme by some brides, among whom many would “shed everything Japanese in favor of American substitutes as fast as they can,” to the dismay of American in-laws hoping that their son's wife might bring decorous kimonos and Japanese lacquerware to show. One Red Cross worker took advantage of her position as instructor to proselytize to her students, admonishing them that “you're going to America where nearly everyone is Christian...so you'd better join up, just to be like the others.” The school soon caught wind of this and relieved her from her duties as instructor; “Americanization” was desired, but within reason. In spirit, however, the would-be missionary's message of becoming “like all the others” reverberated throughout these classes. The women were still Japanese, but more important, they were learning to be *American*.

This contingency of approval on the ability of brides to embrace American customs is apparent throughout the article, as well as in what criticisms it does offer of these brides. Well-versed in pie-making and dish washing though they were, the authors present these women as ignorant of American fashions, who “mix unbelievable hues in their outer clothing and have no idea what to do with a girdle.” The latter item was supposedly a frequent purchase of Japanese brides despite this lack of understanding, “perhaps to hang on the wall of her home as a decoration."245 Most war brides came from the lower strata of Japanese society, the authors claimed, and “with few exceptions, the educated prefer to remain in Japan with all its drawbacks rather than to face racial discrimination and an

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245 Ibid.
uncertain welcome in the United States, no matter how strongly they may be drawn toward
Americans.” (In actuality, the majority came from the lower-middle and middle class.) These women
supposedly set out for America with “their heads full of misconceptions ranging from gold-plated
toilets to lives lived entirely in the atmosphere of screenland night clubs,” owing as much to the tales
told them by their serviceman husbands as to experience in relatively luxurious GI facilities and living
conditions in occupied Japan. Unavoidable though such misconceptions were, the authors wrote,
“nothing much but time and bitter experience can overcome great hazards like language difficulty,
racial question marks and the separation of truth about America from the dream of America as
expounded by homesick soldiers and distorted movies.” 246 “Comedy and tragedy are hopelessly
interlaced through the whole affair,” and these misconceptions would prove the greatest obstacle to
success for these couples, posited the authors, obstacles which in their view all such American-
Japanese marriages would undergo. Life in America was the only remedy for these issues, they wrote,
and time would tell whether or not these couples could weather the misunderstandings and mishaps
along the way. 247

Of greatest import was not whether these brides were capable of adjusting to life in America,
however; rather, it would depend on the ability of those around them to accept these women into their
communities. Becoming part of an American community would be difficult, the authors maintained,
but ready or not, “their bright-eyed children soon will be knocking on school doors in most of the forty-eight states. The great question of how they will fit in and whether the generally will be welcomed or
shunned remains to be answered.” Should they face an initially cold welcome, the authors argued that a
life of hardship in devastated Japan had ideally prepared them to endure tribulation upon their arrival in
America. “They've been children in a nation's defeat, have gone hungry […] if they know what to do,
will almost always do it well […] They've already been treated well by some Americans and insulted
gratuitously by others, so they expect mixed treatment when they get to the States.” Some such brides

246 Ibid.
247 Ibid.
had already “cast off by their own families either as good riddance or in protest against their marriages” and had no course of action left other than an attempt to make a life for themselves in America; others received send-offs “by whole crowds of best-dressed kinfolk” wishing them well on the journey to their new home and sending them to the United States with high hopes. In an interview with the reporters, a Japanese bride sailing to meet her husband who had already returned to the United States confided, “I know everything in going to be harder […] and I'm expecting it. I'd be afraid to go to America thinking that everything was going to be wonderful, because it may not be. But I'm going to try as hard as I can.” That the brides would strive to make it in America was assumed; instead, the onus was placed on the American public to accept these women and embrace their best efforts to become a part of American society. “They're not the very best Japan has,” the authors opined, “and certainly not the worst. And their chances for happiness appear equally mixed.”248 The possibility, however, was there. Failure was no longer a foregone conclusion, but one of many possibilities for these women about to begin life anew halfway across the world in a country with whom their own had so recently been at war. Couples and families appearing in the accompanying photographs all showed happy, hopeful families, together at home in Japanese garb, taking part in home economics classes, or dynamically (and symbolically) looking toward the future as they sailed across the Pacific.

That the authors felt such couples would invariably encounter these difficulties reveals an intersection of cautious optimism with lingering pessimisms as these families began for the first time to travel to the United States en mass. Extolling the ability of most war brides to endure discrimination, the authors nonetheless indicate that warm greetings for these couples in their American communities would be a rarity. Despite its acknowledgment of the great numbers of new families making the journey, the authors insist that the experiences of all would invariably entail the same cold reception at first, if not for quite some time. Hardship was not something only the unfortunate must endure; to Smith and Worden, it was a fate that awaited them all.

248 Ibid.
Smith and Worden's article drew a considerable number of letters to the *Saturday Evening Post* in response, several of which were printed in its March 1 issue of the same year. Some of the letters indicated that the brides and their husbands faced an uphill battle for acceptance once they reached American shores. Reader M. Howard was incensed at the fact that these unions were permitted, and fumed that “the American people have a right to expect the Army and Navy to take better care of the youngsters entrusted to them” than to allow them to marry Japanese women. Thelma Overman, another reader, objected “not because I think we are too good for Japanese girls—but I thoroughly believe that 'East is East,’” and the marriages could only end in failure and heartache for both parties. “It is so heartbreaking to read about our boys marrying Japanese girls […] I have a boy who will probably be going over there. I hope and pray that he won't do anything so foolish.”

Extant marriages were acknowledged, but the hopes of these readers and others were pegged on their not proliferating further.

These criticisms were couched more in blanket statements of opposition and indicated less basis in experience than in assumption of what these marriages were like. Favorable responses to the article, however, were written in relation to personal experience in the case of one reader, and on sincere hopes and what how they felt their own city might receive these couples on the part of another. Mrs. Novelly of Miami, Florida, was confident that the cosmopolitan nature of her city would receive its sons and their Japanese wives with open arms. “I am sure the little Japanese girls will receive the same love and affection that we give to any of our children's choices in marriage,” she declared, “and feel that they will adjust themselves to our way of living and we to their way of thinking.” Confident of the ability of Miami's cultural and ethnic milieu to embrace the Japanese newcomers, open arms and a gradual process of understanding rather than outright discrimination seemed, to Novelly, more likely to greet these couples. Howard Bryan, himself married to a Japanese woman by the name of Mitsue, expressed his agitation at the article's insinuation that Japanese wives were dumb or ignorant as a result of

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unfamiliarity with American customs and habit, as in the use of a girdle. “By the same token, all American women are 'dumb' who don't know how to put on a kimono,” he wrote, “and that means the 'dumb' American women constitute an overwhelming majority.” His wife's unfamiliarity with certain aspects of American culture did not result in his community shunning him and his wife; instead, they eagerly engaged with the Bryans and made their best efforts to accommodate Mitsue as she tried to adjust to her new surroundings. “If all interracial marriages could be received in the United States with the same degree of kindness, sincere effort to understand, and accommodation that we have been accorded here,” he declared, the incoming couples should not expect to encounter the resistance of which the article had warned.

Both pairs of readers, those against the marriages and those venturing that they would receive warm welcomes, were correct in their own way. Neither discrimination nor warm embrace alone characterized the American response to American-Japanese couples moving into their communities, and while some were met with curiosity and acceptance (if reluctant), many also suffered severe discrimination. One serviceman's family, left in his parents' care while he was away on orders from the army, was locked up in the attic for the duration of his time away. “[My grandparents] didn't want their neighbors to think they were harboring a 'Jap,’” recalled his daughter Velina Hasu Houston, and they kept the family under lock and key. Upon returning to find his family imprisoned, her father severed contact with his parents permanently.\(^{250}\) Many servicemen whose parents were unable or unwilling to accept a Japanese daughter-in-law or half-Japanese grandchildren found themselves breaking off relations with their birth family, at times temporarily and others permanently. Other brides would endure insults and spitting on the street from the more intolerant passers-by, refusal of service in restaurants, or resentful looks from Americans bearing a grudge against those of Japanese extraction. Many couples hoping to move into a home of their own endured threats by hostile neighbors or were faced with eviction by discriminating landlords, as in the case of Frank and Sachiko Pfeiffer.\(^{251}\) Much

\(^{250}\) Schukert and Scibatta, *War Brides of World War II*, 225.

of the virulent racism that plagued American views of Japan during the war lingered on in many communities, especially smaller towns or those who had lost young men to the fighting in the Pacific.

Other couples would meet with initial resistance but ultimately find acceptance from their family, friends, and neighbors. Lieutenant James Winterhalter's father, upon hearing that his son had married a Japanese girl, exploded: “When she comes into this house, I go out!” Upon meeting her, however, he was immediately won over by Asa, his polite and gentle daughter-in-law. The rest of the family soon warmed up to her as well, finding ways to forget, look past, or simply not care that she was Japanese. After helping her change her clothes, James' sister exclaimed, ‘Gee! Her skin’s almost as white as mine!’” Asa was quickly welcomed into the family, and her father-in-law was soon boasting around town of his son's fine choice of a wife.\(^\text{252}\) Initial refusal to consent to a son marrying a Japanese girl did not always mean that acceptance was an impossibility, and in many cases fervent opposition gave way to families coming to terms with or fully opening themselves to their son's Japanese wife.

Editorials and rejoinders to articles regarding the chances of success for GI-Japanese marriages written by reporters on the scene or by the grooms themselves often pointed to a general durability of these marriages and proudly touted either an ability to withstand hardship or no encounter with adversity whatsoever. Writing of his own marriage to a Japanese woman, Yuko, former occupation soldier Hugh F. O'Reilly expressed confidence in the convictions of these couples, as the paperwork and process required had strengthened the resolve of those who were willing to go that far to consummate their marriage, a resolve he thought lacking in many of the rush marriages in the United States. Though they had expected a frigid response from their fellow Americans upon coming to the U.S., “we've been in the States three years now, and the only sideways looks that have been cast at her have been looks of admiration […] she couldn't even take a walk on the streets of [our] town without total strangers bowing and smiling to her.”\(^\text{253}\) A March 1952 article in *Ebony* magazine boldly stated that American marriages with Japanese women were more stable than wartime marriages with

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European women, “with much less divorce and desertion than occurred with quickie wartime romances in Europe,” serving both as proof of the couples’ sincerity in their marriage and testament to “the sterling qualities which GIs found in Japanese women.” These marriages were therefore not only successful, but more so than marriages to European women that had encountered less obstacles to their consummation and thus been in greater haste and without careful thought as to their durability. Defenders of marriage to Japanese women quickly appropriated this as proof not only that these marriages could endure, but rather than being a constant balancing act because of their mixed nature were more sound than Euro-American marriages which supposedly had smaller culture gaps and would presumably be more harmonious as result.

In a 1954 study of American-Japanese couples living in the Chicago area, sociologist Anselm Strauss seconded these assertions and identified the twenty-some subject couples as ably demonstrating this stability, ability to accommodate one another, and capacity to endure hardship. Even more than marriages within the same racial or ethnic groups, Strauss argued, “the strains that occur in Japanese-American marriages are patterned and relatively predictable,” with fewer unpleasant and potentially marriage-ending surprises than were found in couples from similar backgrounds. Using a generic (and highly generalized) white American woman as comparative rubric, Japanese wives in the study, “unlike many American wives, […] do not seem to make great demands, or excessively increasing ones, upon their husbands to supply them with money for clothes and other status-symbols.” Since “the pursuit of status has not yet made excessive consumption demands of [the Japanese women],” the marriages are as a result were more harmonious in that regard than marriage to an “American” girl. Lay predictions were now forced to fend with social research that contradicted conventional “wisdom,” which dictated that these marriages were doomed to failure, by supporting the claims of people such as O’Reily with quantified as well as qualified research.

254 “Truth About Japanese War Brides.”
256 Ibid, 103.
To those fearing that marriage to a Japanese woman might threaten American families and cause frictions with parents and siblings, Strauss' analysis indicated that while these possibilities were taken into consideration, marriage of servicemen to Japanese brides generally failed to drastically change intra-family relations. Men who were close to their families expected parental approval; those who maintained distant relations with their family in America did not seek approval as a result. Marriage to a Japanese woman would not disrupt one's familial and social obligations, wrote Strauss, and all involved in the study “are persons who have no obligations—to family, to other institutions, or to an occupational career—strong enough to block mixed marriage.” If ties would be severed and other commitments compromised, it would be because they were weak to begin with. Extramarital affairs were by no means absent from sexual and romantic relationships of servicemen stationed in Japan with dependents at home, but none of the men involved in the study claimed to have engaged in such relationships. Others who had done so typically did not inform their fiancée or spouse, but the men involved in the study had no such commitments to worry about when they had gone to Japan. According to Strauss, none of the men involved in the study “broke an engagement or a firm understanding with an American girl.” Servicemen who had pursued extramarital affairs likely would have done so regardless of whether they were in Japan or elsewhere, but the couples involved in Strauss' study showed marriages based on genuine mutual commitment rather than the abandonment of other obligations.

GI-Japanese marriages were not without their problems, however. While free of many of the problems suffered by “endogamous marriages,” these couples could encounter issues that marriages within one's racial-ethnic group would likely not meet and were often marked by “an inability to solve precisely the same kinds of relational problems that confront many non-interracial unions.” Parental opposition was strong at first in many of the subject couples, resulting in further strain that marriage to

259 Ibid, 102; 105
a woman of the same ethnic group were less likely to undergo. Paradoxically, Strauss indicated that marriage with *nisei* (second-generation Japanese immigrants) born in America would meet with greater resistance than that with *issei* (Japan-born people of Japanese descent).\(^\text{260}\) The problems facing these marriages were different than those facing intra-racial marriage, but not necessarily more severe. On balance, Strauss' conclusions point to a greater overall stability and more easily surmounted obstacles than “typical” American marriages.

The rigorous process that weeded out most couples who were unable to endure the strain, he wrote, generally resulted in couples that would not encounter many sources of strain “operative in many endogamous marriages.” As a result, shotgun marriages and weddings of desperation were not, he wrote, characteristic of these unions as many Americans unfamiliar with the process feared. Additionally, Strauss noted, the mean age of the women in question indicated that these were not marriages of young ladies leaving “marriageable” age, but were well within the average marrying age of Japanese and American women alike.\(^\text{261}\) Yet another entry in the quickly dissolving list of positions supposedly “disproving” the survivability of these marriages, claims that these marriages were the result of desperation among Japanese women losing their youth were disproved both by Strauss' research and the ages of GI-Japanese couples. Though marriages in which one partner or the other was significantly older than the other, the number of older American men marrying younger Japanese women appears far greater than the inverse.

Despite the dearth of young Japanese men in the first months of occupation, nearly all of these men had been repatriated by the end of 1945. Japanese women marrying American GIs were therefore not short of marriage candidates from 1946 onward, yet the numbers of these women marrying American men increased as the occupation wore on. Furthermore, based on accounts of their own courtship, couples who dated and bedded quickly were overwhelmingly more numerous among more temporary arrangements; long periods of courtship, with dates chaperoned for a year in the case of one

\(^{260}\) Ibid, 105.

\(^{261}\) Ibid, 100; 102.
couple, were characteristic of many GI-Japanese marriages. Though shotgun weddings were by no means nonexistent, marriage to an American man was rarely the path of least resistance for Japanese women in occupied Japan. Many such women who married servicemen were working in the occupation administration, with an enviable in income at the time and one that could, under the circumstances, render almost any woman a lucrative candidate in a country with astronomical unemployment, especially male. War brides who married American men to further ensure financial security were many in number, and even for those with regular income had many dependents to support. That this on balance was any different from many marriages in Japan prior to the occupation is a dubious claim. “Traditional” Japanese marriage arrangements were often based on financial considerations, namely whether or not the husband could provide for a family, and was based more on go-betweens than on individual choice. Regardless of motive, these marriages represented a choice hitherto not exercised by Japanese women in selecting their own marriage partner. Parental approval would still be sought in most cases, but many marriages went through against family wishes. An extreme case was that of Midori Langer, whose parents conditioned their approval on a renunciation of their obligations to her. “If [he] leaves you,” they warned her, “don't come back. Just slit your throat.” Langer went through with her marriage despite this, exercising personal choice in determining their future as few Japanese women before her ever had.

In the event of parental rejection on the part of both individuals' families, GI-Japanese couples could, and did, form networks of such married couples where able, namely in major metropolitan areas such as Chicago. This was also undertaken by husbands who were willing “to find their friends almost solely among other mixed couples” so as to accommodate their wives' need for contact with the Japanese language and people. Such networks were not available to isolated couples, and these were forced to integrate themselves further in their communities than might Japanese wives who enjoyed an outlet for Japanese language and interaction. Those with access to support networks of Japanese

language and companionship would often result in the retention of more elements of wives' culture and upbringing, and husbands who had until then not elected to learn Japanese might be forced to work towards some faculty in it. Japanese women without these channels, however, would be faced with isolation or integration that tolerated or even encouraged the preservation of elements of her native culture, but ultimately required overall “Americanization.”

Two and a half years after “They're Bringing Home Japanese Wives” went to print, one of the article's authors, William Worden, wrote another article reflecting a drastic change in tone. Titled “Where Are Those Japanese War Brides?”, Worden's follow-up article showed happy families, settled into American homes and a picturesque American life. The “brown-eyed little children” of Worden and Smith's earlier had long since come to knock on school doors and were generally well-received. Made all the more commonplace by the steady influx of Japanese war brides, the children were seen less as a rarity and increasingly found themselves “welcome in neighborhood games.” Couples with one, even two children were seeing playing happily together, and a black GI, Claudius Simmons, shown laughing with his wife Mitsuko in the yard. Another black GI was happy to report that his family met with no discrimination from members of the community, be they black or white; that “the neighborhood kids, colored and white, are through this house all the time; and the white wives help her out.” Martin Bronfenbrunner, author of the tragic Fusako and the Army, was happily married to his Japanese wife and had taken a position as professor of economics at Harvard University. Kishi Morrison, who had come with her husband to Albany, New York fearing prying curiosity from residents, was pleasantly surprised to find that “people were entirely too much interested in the three-month-old twin daughters of the Morrisons to wast time ogling the mother.”

For all of these couples, wrote Worden, the key ingredient had been gaman, or perserverance. Most of them had managed to demonstrate this quality, both with members of their community and each other, and enjoyed peaceful lives together as a result. One Christian pastor is quoted as happily

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proclaiming that “apparently we are losing our race prejudice,” and that these American-Japanese marriages were a key contributor to all of this. By Worden's account, these couples had managed to blend in to American society so well that it was difficult to track them down, to the extent that “telephone directories as no help […] Mrs. Jones may be from Kansas or Kanazawa. Unless you see the lady, there's no way to tell. […] As wives' they're pretty much present, all 15,000 of them, with *gaman* to spare. But as Japanese brides they've [sic] disappeared.”²⁶⁵

Through a smooth reintegration of Japanese-Americans and Japanese brides of American servicemen, the U.S. government had “hoped to project a smooth transition to life in a postwar America” hostile to people of Japanese extraction by hiding racial tensions and touting these groups, especially Japanese-Americans, as “model minorities” who had not been the disloyal Americans many had wrongly feared they might be. The rehabilitation of Nisei in particular as the model American minority would “strike the first blow in the achievement of a racially integrated postwar nation,” one which would then be able to withstand biting (and poignant) Soviet criticism of American segregation and racial inequality, allowing America to perpetuate its image as leader of the “free” world and staunch opponent of Soviet tyranny “by recasting Japanese Americans as, in effect, model ethnic American subjects deserving of white acceptance.” This did not extend to an acceptance of interracial marriage, however, which was seen by many white Americans as a threat to the prerogatives of white American society. Miscegenation loomed large in many conservative American minds, “still the source of many white Americans' deepest fears about racial integration.” A racially intermixed America was, and in some ways still is, uncharted territory whose uncertainties rendered the concept more frightening than hopeful to many United States citizens, particularly whites. Steeped in fears that superior material, industrial, and organizational development were not solely the province of white society, the “risk at the heart of assumptions that Americanness may be learned, particularly from white Americans, in the case of both the Nisei and the war brides, [was] the potential for the erosion of the myth of

²⁶⁵ Ibid.
American exceptionalism.” Even by accepting the adoption by Japanese women of American customs and family life, the implication that American society and values could be adopted by non-Americans was a fearful prospect, ironic considering that these were the underlying goals of the occupation and its intended reforms.

As these mixed couples became more visible in United States communities and opponents realized that they were unavoidable, momentum shifted to a campaign to assimilate Japanese women on American terms. For those who were able to welcome these couples into their homes and communities, their “disappearance” meant the breaking down of cultural and linguistic barriers and their integration into American society, with an emphasis on American rather than Japanese identity. War brides are shown feeding their infants with spoons, not chopsticks; with few exceptions, photographs captured couples in American dress rather than Japanese kimonos; and coverage focused largely on whether or not the couples had managed to integrate into American society, almost to the exclusion of information about the marriages themselves. Though Strauss’ article and Schnupp and Yui’s follow-up the year after focused on married life for American-Japanese couples, much of the American popular press cast its gaze on issues of entry into American society and the ability of Japanese wives to survive in this context rather than in a “mixed marriage.” Pictorials of successful couples reveal an emphasis on adoption of contemporary ideals of the American nuclear family. Claudius Simmons leans on his lawnmower while his wife Mitsuko stands beside what appears to be a laundry basket; John Disharoon is shown reclining in his chair with newspaper in hand as his wife Masayo (whom he calls “Bonnie”) plays with the children; children play with American toys, and there is not a chopstick in sight. Blending of American and Japanese cultures was common in many of these families, yet was omitted in many articles on the subject. Couples that have “succeeded” are almost without fail depicted in a was as to resonate with American audiences concerned with such marriages transforming the domestic landscape in unpredictable ways. Symbolically and subliminally, readers

were reassured that the more successful couples did not isolate themselves from America but produced either non-threatening syntheses of Japanese and American culture or adopted American “family values” entirely. These marriages need not be feared, the logic went, because they did not threaten to overturn the American family system.

In 1957, a film rendition of Michener’s *Sayonara* starring Marlon Brando and Miiko Taka was released to the American public, but with one simple but drastic change. When casted for the movie, Brando accepted his role as Major Lloyd Gruver on the condition that the film end with Gruver and Hana-ogi set to marry. “People of different races are marrying all the time,” he informed the director. “Why avoid the issue? Face the fact that an American southerner could marry a Japanese girl.” The film's end was changed, and Gruver and Hana-ogi stood proudly before a press corps announcing their plans to wed. Michener himself, formerly convinced that these marriages could only end in tragedy, wrote an article for *Life* magazine in 1955 chronicling, as its title suggests, the “Pursuit of Happiness by a GI and a Japanese.” Telling the story of Frank and Sachiko Pfeiffer, Michener regaled *Life* readers with a tale of a couple who had encountered racist opposition to their marriage (a break in relations with Frank's mother, neighbors initiating eviction proceedings against the couple), acceptance (they

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267 As quoted in Hendler, *Best-Sellers and Their Film Adaptations in Post-War America*, 98.
were welcomed with open arms by their new neighbors at a Chicago shell housing unit, and hope (the family was reunited with Frank's mother, who grew to love her daughter-in-law and grandchildren). Having endured many hardships, the couple nevertheless succeeds and is presented as proof that these marriages can work after all. Within years of publishing the article, Michener himself married a Japanese-American woman. The man who had urged readers not to embark on the “tragic path” of intermarriage with Japanese women had now come to see hope for their future.

Aided by positive press coverage, the fate of these couples seemed, as Caroline Chung Simpson writes, “not only nobler in 1957 but also destined to succeed.” Press coverage had since the early 1950s become increasingly sympathetic and cautiously optimistic as to the success of these marriages, and public opinion, though slow in doing so, gradually came to accept if not embrace these mixed couples. No longer were predictions of these couples' futures dominated by journalistic gloom and doom, but “turned away from forecasting the futility of Japanese war brides' futures in America to embrace the Japanese war bride as a symbol of the realization of the American dream.”

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268 Michener, “Pursuit of Happiness by a GI and a Japanese.”
brides had become symbols of hope, both for a resolution of America's boiling racial tensions and that the “American dream” could be exported to the world. Acceptance of Japanese war brides was eased by diverting focus from their Japanese identity and a reconstitution focusing on their role as exemplars of a fading American feminine ideal. Japanese women could thus be represented as preserving the American family system without dismantling it as a “racial other.” Racial tensions in America were thereby ignored but not resolved. The integration of war brides was a stopgap for those who feared racial integration, not cause to embrace the further integration of other non-white ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{272}

\textsuperscript{272} Ibid, 177.
CONCLUSION

"It is a paradox of modern warfare that defeat places strong responsibilities on the conqueror while it impels the beaten power toward dependence on his former foe [...] In order to ensure their own economic and military stability the conquerors may help rebuild the economies of the defeated nations. On the other hand, there is no source which the defeated power or powers can look for economic hope—and hence, survival—except to its conquerors. Add to this the mutual suspicions of the victorious allies—each of whom may compete for the loyalty of the defeated nation—and the picture of reciprocal dependence-responsibility is complete."

The American occupation of Japan, like other military occupations in years since World War II, fostered unique systems of interchange and interdependency hitherto unseen in the aftermath of war. Co-dependent relationships between the two nations and their respective peoples altered mutual perceptions and misconceptions in ways that only defeat and occupation could have brought about. Recognizing the dependency of a shattered Japan on the American victors allowed for the reconstitution of “childlike” Japan as in need of benevolent guidance rather than irredeemably immature in its “civilized” development. New roles were envisioned for Japan, from American plaything to valuable ally and model for shoring up American support throughout the world, such as the troubled Iran in which the United States was increasingly investing its energies.

Speaking for his fellow American servicemen, cartoonist Bill Hume declared that the former enemy nation had become a “second home” of sorts that would leave an indelible influence on them, and innumerable fond reminiscences of their time in “the land of Fuji-san.”

“Only when one is entitled to leave Japan does one get that feeling—of how much one has missed, of what Japan has meant, of realization that the folks back in the States must be made to understand that the Far East is an integral part of our future, that their valuable culture must make a contribution to ours, and will!”

Returning servicemen would carry back elements of Japanese culture and daily life, from taking one's shoes off at the door to eating with chopsticks, or even marrying a Japanese woman. These soldiers, wives, and other unofficial envoys brought images of Japan as a thing of beauty to Americans that facilitated the erosion of wartime distrust of the Japanese people. Film depictions of Japan shifted

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273 Henry, “Initial Reactions.”
away from renditions of “Jap hordes” to the more positive images of torii and geisha. As contemporary film critic Ray Falk remarked, “the mysterious Orient will be longer be mysterious if American producers continue using Shinto shrines and geisha girls as backdrops for their films.”

Marriage to Japanese women constituted the greatest transformation of American perceptions of Japan while also acting as the greatest influence of the occupation on American race relations and social landscape. More than a mere embrace of former enemies, these marriages represented a violation of taboos against miscegenation that threw into question claims of the superiority, and exclusivity, of white American society. These women were ultimately accepted as eligible for entry into the American fold contingent upon their ability to adhere to largely white gender norms in the United States, but with the unintended effect of the erosion of myths of white superiority and the American family structure as the preserve of heterogeneous couples. Thus, the way was paved for the slow but certain proliferation of “mixed couples” in later years and proof presented that non-whites could become equal participants in the white American family and, later, members of the dominant

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socio-political order.

American perceptions of Japan would change further in the intervening decades and continue to undergo constant transformations even today. “Mindless” Japanese became ideal mimics of American values in the occupation, fitting partners in America's Pacific security apparatus during the early Cold War, and robotic warriors in the economic wars of the 1970s and 80s. Historian John Dower neatly sums up the overriding images of Japan among Americans in the postwar period, beginning with a Japan reduced to misguided child in the early occupation:

“This tottering little figure was, of course, the more common rendering of MacArthur's 'boy of twelve'—an old image of innate backwardness and stunted development that was reassuring to many Westerners, being neither militarily nor economically threatening. This childlike maker of knickknacks and cheap appliances would wander the byway of the American and European imaginations until the late 1960s—when, all of a sudden it seemed, Japanese automobiles and quality electronic goods surged onto Western markets and the little men were transformed into economic 'miracle men' and 'supermen' almost overnight. The response then was much as it had been a quarter-century earlier, when imperial Japan went to war and caught the Western powers by surprise: the genie had come out of the bottle again, only this time in a business suit rather than in khaki.”

As trade wars raged, the “Japanese model” of business management vacillated in American minds between road to corporate success and threat to American business interests and, as in wartime, the very values for which the United States purportedly stood. In many ways these views had come full circle: the mindless “Jap soldier” that had fueled Japan's military expansion in the 1930s and 40s was now the robotic corporate soldier driving Japan's domination of consumer product manufactures.

Before the war, during its most intense conflicts, and in times of peace, Japan has continued to represent many things in the American imagination. Brought closer than ever before by America's military presence in Japan from 1945 to 1952, Americans were confronted with realities and fantasies that set wartime renderings of Japan in new directions that diverged from older notions as often as they intersected. But of utmost importance in all of this was the intense, unavoidable, and daily contact between the two nations that had remained, quite literally, an ocean apart for most of their intercourse to date. Contact; sex and love; intense rivalry and interdependency: all had come to bear in drastically altering many American images of Japan in the postwar while ensuring the survival of others in new

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forms. Change and continuity within these images were the result of the intensity and variety of contact between Americans and whom they increasingly viewed as “our new friends, the Japanese.”

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