

Spring 5-3-2011

# A War Within World War II: Racialized Masculinity and Citizenship of Japanese Americans and Korean Colonial Subjects

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## Recommended Citation

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## Introduction

World War II forced both Japan and the United States of America to disavow racist rhetoric and ideologies within their respected societies. As beacons of imagined righteousness in their motives to pursue militaristic actions, Japan and the United States positioned themselves in such a way that buttressed their stance. Although the rejection of such racist policies prompted the inclusion of minority bodies—Japanese Americans in the U.S. military and Koreans in the Japanese Imperial Army—the two groups were used as a form of propaganda that built a projection of racial unity. Though on the surface the implementation of Japanese Americans and Korean colonial subjects in militaristic spaces was viewed as a step towards inclusion of difference, in actuality, the policy of deploying minority bodies was a racial façade that maintained the exclusivity and oppression within the military and larger society of Japan and the United States.

With the growing Asia-Pacific War depleting the resources of the Japanese Empire, the conscription of colonial subjects eroded and questioned the dominant conceptions of Japanese masculinity and citizenship. Though Japan colonized Korea in 1910 and was an empire before WWII, the Korean presence in the Japanese Imperial Army masked the construction of an imagined bond between Japan and Korea. The Special Volunteer Soldier System was created in 1938 to funnel Koreans into the Japanese Imperial Army under the guise that “between [Japanese] Mainlanders and Koreans, a sympathy destined by blood” connected Koreans and Japanese. More than 240,000 Koreans served in the Japanese military and they were all indoctrinated that they were Japanese and were to be used as “humble shields [for the nation] as members of the glorious Imperial Forces” (Utsumi 205). This very mentality of being a part of the

Japanese citizenry supported many Koreans' desires to volunteer in the Imperial Japanese Army. Although this sentiment influenced many Koreans to support the Japanese military machine, others were persuaded to volunteer because it "provided stable jobs away from their poor farming villages" and the Government-General of Korea "promoted the splendor of volunteer soldiers" (Utsumi 205). Even though this binary between those Koreans who were serving to prove their "Japanese-ness" and those who desired to foster a living, both groups of Korean colonial subjects were directly affected by the forces of Japanese masculinity and the idea of citizenship, whether that be Korean or Japanese.

Across the Pacific, the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Imperial Japanese naval forces on December 7, 1941 ushered in a new era for American militarism—and, more importantly, a re-formation of the American national identity. In the immediate aftermath of the attack, people of Japanese ethnicity, whether alien or citizen residing in America, were targeted by the general public as a threat to national security. With the signing of Executive Order 9066, President Roosevelt mandated the relocation and incarceration of all people of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast. Once interned, the U.S. Army and the War Relocation Authority (WRA) issued a loyalty questionnaire<sup>1</sup> to determine whether Japanese American men would swear allegiance to America and denounce any ties with Japan by joining the U.S. military. This loyalty questionnaire divided the incarcerated Japanese American community and caused internal strife among internees. Following the questionnaire, the American government re-conscripted

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<sup>1</sup> The loyalty questionnaire was controversial because of two questions: question 27 and 28. Question 27 asked "are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?" and Question 28 inquired if "you [will] swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and foreswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, to any other foreign government, power or organization?" (Asahina 46).

Japanese Americans into the Army. Those Japanese American men who served were sacrificing their lives in order to become full-fledged U.S. citizens, and the questionnaire served as not only a loyalty test but also a test of manhood.

Comparing the experiences of Japanese Americans and Korean colonial subjects during World War II is an important step in understanding the global influences of racial thought and masculinity in the context of a new shift in world order. The backdrop of World War II unmasks the parallels between Japan and the United States in their shared perceptions of their racial minorities. Many people would first think a comparison between Japanese Americans and Koreans as unrelated and a comparison between Japan and Germany a more feasible project. However, historian Takashi Fujitani, who first juxtaposed the experiences of Japanese American soldiers and Korean soldiers, notes that “American liberalism during wartime (then and now) shares much more with what has been called Japanese fascism than most scholars and the general public might like to admit” (Fujitani, 34). In addition, before the Japanese Americans and the Koreans “could be asked to die in order to defend society, they had to be welcomed into the nation and enticed to enjoy the benefits of their inclusion” (Fujitani, 33). This honors thesis builds upon Fujitani’s scholarship by inserting another perspective in analyzing the experiences of these men through a lens that focuses on the intersections of race and masculinity and how that influences dominant modes of citizenship.

The construction of race in both the U.S. and Japan were different yet Japan appropriated the meaning of race from the U.S. Borrowing from Nadia Kim, who states that one of her aims of her book *Imperial Citizens* is to “analyze the hegemonic link...[of] the backbone of American ‘race’ dynamics in both countries (Korea and the

United States), this project will attempt to juxtapose the implementation of U.S. racial ideologies through the deployment of Japanese American soldiers and Korean colonial soldiers (3). Although Kim's framework examines the link between Korea and Japan, I will emulate her transnational outlook but through a Japan and the United States connection of racial thought. Historian John Dower, who exposed the shared similar deployments of racial rhetoric for both Japanese and American officials during the war, noted that

It became apparent that many of the idioms of "race," on both the Western and the Japanese sides, are best understood in a larger context of hierarchical and authoritarian thinking. In the war in Asia—and in general—considerations of race and power are inseparable. As it turned out, much that may at first glance appear to be unique in the clash between Japan and the West in the early 1940s was, on the contrary, familiar in practice and formulaic in the ways it was expressed (Dower XI).

Both Japan and the United States utilized similar strategies concerning race when dealing with racial minority groups within their society, whether colonized territories or colonized peoples. The racial framework in the United States revolved around the white-black binary that otherized any non-white community. In Japan, the government created national sentiments that resulted in discrimination against other races, nationalities, and cultures of Asia. Although the presence of racial rhetoric was different in Japan and the United States, both governments operated the notion of race under a similar guise.

This paper interrogates the intersections of masculinity, race, and citizenship of Japanese American soldiers and Korean colonial soldiers during World War II.<sup>2</sup> I

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<sup>2</sup> This transnational project takes into account what Nina Glick Schiller describes as the tendency for transnational scholars to neglect the inequality of power between states and thus hinder the intersections of imperialism and transnational studies (443). My research project deals with the power relationship between Japan and the U.S. and the ways in which U.S. imperialism is transmitted and utilized across the Pacific Ocean in Japan.

compare Japanese American soldiers in the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team<sup>3</sup>, comprised of Japanese Americans from Hawaii and the incarceration camps, with the Korean colonial soldier. As Yen Le Espiritu declares in *Asian American Men and Women*, this research paper will be “more than a synthesis of existing analyses; it is also a *rereading* of past works to draw out the significance of gender” [emphasis in text]; because of the pressures of “citizenship” for these men, I am interleaving citizenship with these theoretical re-readings of gender (16).

I argue that Japanese Americans—both men of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> and draft resisters from Heart Mountain and Minidoka—and Korean colonial subjects were oppressed through their perceived racial difference, masculine inferiority, and projected treacherous citizenship, and that these two groups were able to resist a racialized male hegemony<sup>4</sup> while creating alternative modes of manhood for Koreans and Japanese Americans. In the United States, Japanese American men engaged a white male American hegemonic society through their actions over the nature of U.S. citizenship by employing what political philosopher Antonio Gramsci has termed counter-hegemonic strategies that subverted white male normativity by presenting an alternative construction of U.S. citizenship with respect to their racialized masculinity (300). In the Japanese Empire, Korean colonial subjects battled the Japanese patriarchal society over the construction of

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<sup>3</sup> The 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Hawaiian National Guard was comprised of Japanese American soldiers from Hawaii and was commissioned as the first segregated Japanese American unit. After the formation of the 100<sup>th</sup>, there was a call for Japanese American volunteers to create the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team from the incarceration camps in the mainland U.S. and Hawaii. While fighting in Europe, the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion exemplified themselves as a formidable fighting unit and was attached to the 442<sup>nd</sup> as its first battalion, but retained its distinction due to their commendable actions (it then became the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> RCT).

<sup>4</sup> Italian intellectual Antonio Gramsci describes dominant and oppressive power structures as “hegemony.” The most powerful group in a society seeks to legitimate their dominance by normalizing the status quo through physical coercion, ideological, political, and cultural processes (Gramsci *An Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935*). U.S. hegemony is maintained through the perpetuation of white male normativity, which are the established norms of white heterosexual Protestant American men.

Japanese citizenship. The subordination of Korea by Imperial Japan prompted Korean colonial subjects to not only fight against racial constructions borrowed from the U.S. but also the ability to determine their own “national status, albeit racialized” (Kim 9).

Ultimately, the actions of both the Japanese American soldiers and Korean colonial soldiers exposed that they were able to re-trouble the notion of U.S. and Japanese citizenship under their own terms of racial and male self-definition.

In order to demonstrate these intersectionalities of race, masculinity, and citizenship, I will implement feminist scholar Judith Butler’s theory that “gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities” (*Gender Trouble* 3). Through the acknowledgement of the intersections of different influences, I hope to extrapolate from the experiences and cultural texts of these two minority groups. I also utilized Butler in order to show the gendered constructions of male identity within the institution of the military. Butler’s gender critique allows for a more rich comprehension of the feminization and emasculation of Japanese American and Korean soldiers. I will discuss her theory more in the next section and the history of racialization and feminization of Asian Americans.

I employ the definition of citizenship by Dr. Evelyn Nakano Glenn: “Citizenship has been used to draw boundaries between those who are included as members of the community and entitled to respect, protection, and rights and those who are excluded and thus not entitled to recognition and rights (1). This working definition will be my framework in terms of extrapolating issues of second-class citizenship from the experiences of the two racial minority groups.



This honors thesis is organized into two chapters—the first chapter involves the experiences of Japanese Americans and the second chapter with Korean colonial subjects. I split my thesis into two chapters in order to show a transnational parallel of how racial minorities within two distinct nations struggled with similar issues of race, masculinity, and citizenship. The first chapter will specifically deal with Japanese American soldiers, draft resisters, and prisoners of war and their struggle to contend with racist and emasculation that directly subordinated their citizenship. In the second chapter, I interrogate several cultural texts to expose the resistance of Korean colonial subjects.

For both groups, I will be taking two different methodological approaches in discussing Japanese American soldiers and Korean colonial soldiers. For Japanese Americans, I will use interviews, news coverage, memoirs and historical events to support my argument. However, for Korean colonial subjects, I will extrapolate from fictional texts, film, and memoirs. I understand that historians tend to shy away from fictional work, but fiction comments on society. History is storytelling, in simplistic terms, and these authors depict a history that evokes the experiences of marginalized voices within Imperial Japan. These authors are contesting historical memory in such a manner that they grant marginalized peoples a voice in their own historical struggles.

Chapter 1: Japanese American Men during World War II

The Dichotomy of Historical Constructions: American man and Asian American man

Chinese male immigrants could be said to occupy, before 1940, a ‘feminized’ position in relation to white male citizens and, after 1940, a ‘masculinity’ whose *racialization* is the material trace of the history of this ‘gendering’” –Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*

The notion of the “American man” and masculinity during World War II was embodied in the “soldierly masculinity” of the white American soldier. Jon R. Adams explains that “soldierly masculinity” during war is the “particular brand of traditional male function associated with heroism—courage, suppressed emotion, strength, and clearheaded decisiveness” (9). The U.S. military projected anything deviating from this “soldierly masculinity,” whether resisting conscription or being unwilling to die during combat, as not masculine, indeed even “feminine.” The actual battlefield, meanwhile, is a male-dominated setting that Judith Butler describes as exacerbating gender binaries: “the economy (U.S. military) that include[s] the feminine as the subordinate term in a binary opposition of masculine/feminine [that] excludes the feminine, produces the feminine as that which must be excluded for that economy (U.S. military) to operate” (*Bodies That Matter* 36). Performance scholar Jose E. Munoz theorizes this fear of the feminine, noting that “the social construct of masculinity is experienced...as a regime of power that labors to invalidate, exclude, and extinguish faggotry [and] effeminacy” (58). The “masculinity” of the Japanese American soldiers and draft resisters was constructed in opposition to the “soldierly masculinity” of white male normativity. Whether they fought or not, they were not men.

The phrases “Japanese” and “Japanese man” were racialized and gendered constructions when Asian immigrants began to migrate to the United States for economic

stability and fortune in the late 1800s and early 1900s. During those immigration waves, hostility erupted toward the Asian immigrants because American society deemed them inassimilable subjects and thus economic threats to the livelihoods of white American workers. This phenomenon became known as the Yellow Peril: Asians in America were perceived as potential threats, harkening “military invasion and foreign trade from Asia, competition to white labor from Asian labor, the alleged moral degeneracy of Asian people, and potential miscegenation between whites and Asians” (Espiritu 100). David Eng asserts that, “alternative markers of difference—race, ethnicity, class, nationality, language—are often uncritically subsumed into the framework of sexual difference” (5). During the Yellow Peril period, Asian American masculinity was marked and effeminized in differential relation to white male normativity. This same racialized masculinity marked Japanese American soldiers and draft resisters’ masculinity 40 years later during the U.S. involvement in WWII. The Japanese American soldiers and draft resisters utilized their positions both on the battlefield and in the incarceration camps to assert an alternative masculinity in the face of constant emasculation by the U.S. military.

The term “Japanese American man” alludes to the intersection of racialized masculinity and citizenship (or lack thereof) of Asian and Asian Americans, which was apparent from their initial arrival in the late 1800s and fully revealed during World War II. Lisa Lowe’s seminal *Immigrant Acts* explains the historical legacy of gender identity and citizenship for Asian Americans. Lowe believes that “through the legal enfranchisement of specific Asian ethnic groups as *exceptions* to the whites-only classification, the status of Asians as *nonwhite* [‘aliens ineligible to citizenship’] is legally restated and reestablished” [emphasis in text] (20). Asian immigrants ineligible

for citizenship (established through various laws in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries)<sup>5</sup> and the feminized position<sup>6</sup> of Chinese men (due to restrictions in the jobs available to them) reveals a history of racialized masculinity connected to citizenship that was well established prior to World War II. The U.S. military racialized the Japanese American soldiers and draft resisters' masculinity as other, as lesser, which prevented them from being seen as fully enfranchised American citizens.

Sociologist Morris Janowitz argues in *Military Conflict* that “military service was defined as an integral aspect of citizenship” (71). However, Japanese American men during WWII were stripped of their constitutional rights by their incarceration and thereafter forced into the U.S. army through conscription. Eliot Cohen notes that, historically, many philosophers have supported conscription for egalitarian reasons. Cohen cites Alexis de Tocqueville who declared, “the government may do almost whatever it pleases, provided it appeals to the whole community at once; it is the unequal distribution of the weight, not the weight itself that commonly occasions resistance” (Cohen 144). However, in the case of Japanese Americans during WWII, the notion of “unequal distribution of the weight” is mapped onto the bodies of the Japanese American population. Burdened by the injustices of the government, incarceration, and conscription, the Japanese Americans soldiers and draft resisters each had divergent ideas

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<sup>5</sup> Unlike their European immigrant counterpart, Asians were victimized by the institutionalized racial discrimination of public policies: the Page Act of 1875, which prohibited entry of immigrants considered bad (directed at the Chinese), Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which barred all Chinese from entering the U.S., the Gentleman's Agreement of 1908, which restricted but did not halt the entrance of Japanese into the U.S., and the National Origins Act of 1924, which prohibited immigration from East Asia (Takaki 14, 27).

<sup>6</sup> Lowe explains that because “of the concentration of Chinese men in ‘feminized’ forms of work—such as laundry, restaurants, and other service-sector jobs—Chinese male immigrants could be said to occupy, before 1940, a ‘feminized’ position in relation to white male citizens and, after 1940, a ‘masculinity’ whose *racialization* is the material trace of the history of this ‘gendering’” [emphasis in text] (11-12).

about citizenship and conscription. The Japanese American soldiers created a masculinity that re-configured U.S. citizenship through their actions on the battlefield, whereas the Japanese American draft resisters were determined to demonstrate their right to citizenship as full “men” through the judicial system. Both groups, therefore, “took action” in response to the government’s proffer of membership in conventionally defined soldier manhood. The judiciary and military path tests the logic of the States in explicit relationship to citizenship and implicit relationship to masculinity and personhood.

The Rescue of the “Lost Battalion:” Japanese American Racialized Masculinity and Citizenship

During October of 1944, the Japanese American soldiers of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> not only rescued the “Lost Battalion” of the Texas 141<sup>st</sup> Regiment but also reinforced their American citizenship through the display of their (racialized Asian) masculinity, even while their bravery, viewed through the perspective of their racialized bodies, rendered them as inferior and thus complicated their notion of citizenship. The 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> not only fought the Nazis but also battled Major General E. Dahlquist’s stated presumption<sup>7</sup> of their masculine inferiority and their second-class citizenship. On October 23, 1944 the Nazis surrounded and cut-off the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 141<sup>st</sup> from any support in the Vosges Mountains of Italy. Dahlquist, the commanding officer of the 36<sup>th</sup> Division, assigned the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> RCT the task of rescuing the “lost” 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 141<sup>st</sup> Regiment. Dahlquist initially issued two unsuccessful attempts<sup>8</sup> to rescue the Lost Battalion,<sup>9</sup> and ultimately Dahlquist committed the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> to lead the rescue.<sup>10</sup> Assigning the responsibility of rescuing the “Lost Battalion” to the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> while other white American units were unsuccessful provided a prime opportunity for the men to assert their efficacy as soldiers and thus, their masculinity and their suitability as full U.S. citizens. Although the rescue was a great opportunity to prove their U.S. citizenship

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<sup>7</sup> Dahlquist represented a large sentiment throughout the U.S. military during the European campaign. Like Major General Dahlquist, General Eisenhower told General George C. Marshall, the U.S. Army chief of staff, “no thank you” in response to whether he wanted the Japanese American unit (Duus 159).

<sup>8</sup> The first unsuccessful attempt consisted of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 141<sup>st</sup> Regiment trying to break through the German fortifications to rescue the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. General Dahlquist then committed both the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalions to the effort but to no avail (Stern 74).

<sup>9</sup> There were many “lost” battalions during World War II but because of the high number of casualties and the role of the 100th/442nd RCT in the rescuing the “lost” battalion of the 141<sup>st</sup> Regiment, this particular “Lost Battalion” received a lot of media attention (Asahina 165).

<sup>10</sup> The other infantry in the 36<sup>th</sup> Division—143<sup>rd</sup> Infantry—“did not seem interested in risking their all to save the lost battalion” and the sole responsibility fell onto the weary shoulders of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> (Duus 201).

through battle, “the men of the 442d [sic] blame[d] Dahlquist for giving them this dangerous assignment, as if it had been a personal rather than a tactical decision” (Asahina 163). The Japanese American soldiers collectively believed that “there were clear-cut objectives to be purchased with their blood and their sacrifice”; however, many viewed their roles in the American military as “cannon fodder” (Sterner 70). Dahlquist deployed the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> to rescue the “Lost Battalion” not because of their fighting prowess but because he viewed them as expendable due to their racialized masculinity and his belief in their inferiority as Japanese American men. The 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> was at a disadvantage because Dahlquist did not extend the assistance of other infantry units<sup>11</sup> to their mission, and he was determined to have the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> “keep going...and [not] let them stop” (Duus 202). Dahlquist’s refusal to reinforce the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> signaled that the lives of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> were disposable and not worth nearly as much as the white American soldiers. The Japanese American soldiers perceived their expendability and acknowledged that “as long as we save [the “Lost Battalion”], nobody cares what becomes of us” (Duus 204). Dahlquist’s actions boxed in the men of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> as lacking “soldierly masculinity,” and Dahlquist’s presumptions were subverted on the frontline of battle.

When Dahlquist personally visited the frontlines to inspect the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup>, his trusted aide, Lieutenant Lewis, was killed due to his ineptness, and his reaction heard by the Japanese American soldiers further highlighted his different views on the masculinity of white American soldiers and the Japanese American soldiers of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Twice Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Pursall, the commanding white American officer of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup>, solicited Dahlquist for more reinforcements and Dahlquist answered “I can give you only engineers” the first time and simply “no” the second (Yenne 171, Duus 212).

Dahlquist felt that Lewis, a white American officer, “had endeared himself...as a real man” due to “his constant good nature, his keen mind, and his everlasting willingness to perform every task given him as a soldier. He was dependable and courageous” (Asahina 183). Unlike the men of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup>, Lieutenant Lewis did not experience actual combat, but Dahlquist valorized him as a courageous soldier because of his faithful attentiveness, patriotism, and his death, the ultimate sacrifice to the war effort. Furthermore, months after the successful rescue of the “Lost Battalion,” Dahlquist, in his farewell letter to the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup>, failed to mention and commend the enormous sacrifice<sup>12</sup> and patriotism of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> in successfully rescuing the “Lost Battalion” (Asahina 202), which reinforced the “popular equation of American masculinity with *white* masculinity” [emphasis in text] (Jarvis 123). By labeling Lewis as a “real man” and not recognizing the bravery of the Japanese American soldiers, Dahlquist gestures that the men of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> are “unreal men” and effeminate. Dahlquist’s connotation of a “real man” embodied in Lewis is yet another reinforcement of white male normativity, which was denied to Japanese American soldiers because of their racialized masculinity. Moreover, when juxtaposing the death of Lewis with the high casualties accumulated by the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> and the response or lack thereof by Dahlquist, the death of Lewis overshadows the many deaths of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup>. By positioning the deaths and sacrifices of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> as unremarkable—beneath or inferior to the death of Lewis—Dahlquist disallows the masculinity of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> while maintaining the white male hegemony of the U.S. military.

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<sup>12</sup> Before the rescue of the “Lost Battalion,” the strength of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> measured at about 2,950 men. After the rescue, 161 had died in battle, 43 were missing, and about 2,000 were wounded (882 were seriously wounded). The 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> had lost about two-thirds of their fighting capacity while rescuing 211 men of the “Lost Battalion” (Duus 217-18).



When the Japanese American soldiers rescued the “Lost Battalion,” the responses of the men of the 141<sup>st</sup> Regiment were not only filled with praise but they also highlighted the racialized masculinity of the Japanese American soldiers, which complicated the different views of U.S. citizenship held by the two outfits. A war correspondent reported that the rescued white American soldiers said, “We never thought we’d be this happy to see Jap faces” (Duus 211) and Ichigi Kashiwagi, a soldier of K Company, remembers them saying “I’m glad to see you Japs” (Asahina 194). Although the responses laud the heroism of the Japanese American soldiers, they are still racialized as the other and not American. The word “Jap” is a racial slur imbued with hostility. By adding the word “Jap” to their exclamations, the white American soldiers reduced the heroism of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> to their racial otherness. The statement “we never thought we’d be this happy to see Jap faces” only alienates the sacrifice of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> because it associates them with the Japanese enemy, which thereby troubles their eligibility for American citizenship.

Moreover, Sergeant Bill Hull, a member of the “Lost Battalion” recalled that he “was so proud to see that *little* fellow moving along so fast with his rifle” [emphasis added] (Duus 210) in reference to the Japanese American soldiers. Although commending the Japanese American soldier, his labeling the men of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> as “little”<sup>13</sup> focuses on their shorter stature. Being “small” or “short” is a cultural value of physical inferiority. R.W. Connell explains that a “masculine gender is...certain muscular shapes and tensions, certain posture [height] and ways of moving [, and] bodily

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<sup>13</sup> The average height for white American soldiers was 5 feet 8 inches and weighed about 152 pounds (Jarvis 59) and the average height for Japanese American soldiers was 5 feet 4 inches and weighed about 125 pounds (Stern 5).

experience is often central in...our understanding of who and what we are” (52-3). The utilization of “little” is a subordinating description, which infers a lack of height or strength, thus questioning the physical prowess of the Japanese American soldiers and thereby reducing their masculinity. Hull positions the men of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> as antithetical to his own body and to white masculinity, and his own identity as “white American soldier/man” stands in contradiction to the “little fellow[s]” of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> because of the difference in size, and this difference whether that be through race or stature is central to the maintenance of white male hegemony.

To add insult to injury, the immediate press coverage of the rescuing of the “Lost Battalion” failed to mention the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup>. In the *New York Times* on November 7, 1944, the headlines read “Doughboys Break German Ring to Free 270 Trapped Eight Days” and the rescuing soldiers were called “Yanks” and “doughboys”<sup>14</sup> (Asahina 193). Although the Japanese American soldiers were referred to as “Yanks,” which would symbolize their acceptance as masculine American citizens, the article silences their Japanese American-ness. The erasure of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> in the rescue prevents the repositioning of the Japanese American soldiers as American citizens because “the American media helped the military maintain the perception that America’s fighting manhood was still racially coded as white”<sup>15</sup> (Jarvis 148). Portraying the Japanese Americans as the rescuers of a white American Battalion would provoke anxieties about Japanese American masculinity and subsequently imply the inferiority of white American

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<sup>14</sup> The term “doughboy” was an informal term for American soldiers and it dropped out of popular use after World War II (George 21).

<sup>15</sup> Although the Japanese Americans were initially erased from the article about rescuing the “Lost Battalion,” they were highly publicized because it served as a propaganda tool but it directly shows the fluidity of masculinity.

masculinity. Similarly, in the Pacific theater, “the [actual] castration of a white American soldier by Japanese soldiers raised questions about U.S. [white] superiority” (Jarvis 131). The incident evoked a threatening Japanese image in the minds of the American GIs. Although not Japanese nationals, the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup>'s heroic actions challenged the presumed superiority of white American masculinity. Moreover, the photograph accompanying the article depicted the commander of the “Lost Battalion” shaking hands with a white medical officer with no Japanese Americans present (Asahina Photograph dated Oct. 31, 1944 between pages 180-181). The actual elimination of the presence of Japanese American soldiers from the successful rescue rewrites their bravery as not noteworthy and invalidates their sacrifice. Having a white medical officer stand in for the heroism of the Japanese American soldiers implies that the men of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> were incapable of mirroring the white male masculinity of their counterparts.

The Japanese American soldiers hoped that their heroic actions and their accolades they garnered in the rescue of the “Lost Battalion” would facilitate their acceptance as masculine American soldiers. During the valiant rescue, Rudy Tokiwa, a soldier in the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup>, was in terrible pain due to an enemy artillery blast that wounded his back and hands but he “scolded himself [by saying] “Why be bothered about a little [wound]” (Duus 214). Tokiwa’s stoicism in the face of injuries and his sacrifice in blood demonstrate that by enduring pain for the war effort as a racialized other, he is creating a masculinity that is distinctly Japanese American. Tokiwa is also reclaiming the “little” as a site of pride and self-worth. Another Japanese American soldier, Noboru Fujinaka, reassured his parents before the mission that he “will not die a needless death” and that “the real achievement is to give one’s all for the country” (Duus

202). Fujinaka adamantly displays his loyalty and willingness to sacrifice his life on the battlefield for the U.S. to enfranchise him as an American citizen.

Several Japanese American soldiers distinguished themselves during the rescue so much that their efforts warranted the Medal of Honor, the highest individual medal in the U.S. military, but they were demoted, thus signifying that the heroic actions of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> were deemed subordinate to the contributions of white American soldiers. Their bravery and heroism<sup>16</sup> were downgraded to the Distinguished Service Cross or the even lower graded Silver Star. These demotions supported the larger U.S. military's views that Japanese American soldiers did not deserve the same honor as white American soldiers, and these decisions invalidated the worth of Japanese American soldiers because "combat was the ultimate test of the soldier's courage and manhood. Thus wounds incurred while fighting bravely, in the context of killing...could bestow honor" (Jarvis 94). The perception that their deaths were not worth as much as the deaths of white American soldiers affirms their inferiority as American soldiers, and even in death, the Japanese American soldiers were not "real" Americans. Although individually barred from high distinction, the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 442<sup>nd</sup> RCT, and later the Regiment were bestowed with the honor of being nickname the "Purple Heart<sup>1</sup> Battalion" due to the high casualty rate of the Japanese American soldiers (Yenne 248). Collectively, the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> affirmed their racialized masculinity as uniquely American because they were awarded seven Presidential Unit Citations, the highest distinction for an outfit (Yenne 247).

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<sup>16</sup> There were four Japanese American soldiers—Joe Sakato, Barney Hajiro, Joe Nishimoto, and Robert Kuroda— endorsed for the Medal of Honor but were later downgraded (Asahina 199).

The men of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> asserted a particular racialized masculinity that reinforced a specific U.S. citizenship that was contradictory to the overarching U.S. citizenship predicated upon white male normativity. Portrayed as expendable and incompatible for high distinction while being subjected to racial and emasculating discourses, the men of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> were able to resist white male hegemony by successfully rescuing the “Lost Battalion” and asserting their racialized masculinity through their gallant actions on the battlefield. Thus, their actions demonstrated that their citizenship status was uniquely American while resisting popular conceptions of their racialized masculinity and U.S. citizenship.

Drafting a Defiant Masculinity Against the U.S. Military: Japanese American Draft Resisters

Although “military service had been promoted to the Nisei<sup>17</sup> as a precious opportunity to prove their loyalty and patriotism [and masculinity],” (own assertion) the draft resisters diverged from this popular path and took a stance that both alienated them from the Japanese American community and from American norms of masculinity and citizenship (Muller 1).<sup>18</sup> The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)<sup>19</sup> warned the Japanese American men that the “draft shall be one criterion by which we shall be judged...we cannot fail” (Muller 69). The Japanese American draft resisters at Heart Mountain and Minidoka were judged for not accepting the draft and exposed the grand injustices of the U.S. government while reclaiming their masculinity and citizenship.<sup>20</sup> Although Historian Christian Appy states that the U.S. military constructed “anyone who [was] unwilling or unable to become a soldier [as] simply a crybaby, a coward, and a fairy” (91), the draft resisters of Heart Mountain and Minidoka reconstructed their identity as “Japanese American men” by demonstrating that they did not need to conform

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<sup>17</sup> Second-generation Japanese American citizen

<sup>18</sup> Legal scholar Eric Muller is quoted quite significantly throughout the analysis of the draft resisters because he is the leading scholar on this particular group and there is a limited amount of scholarship that actually scrutinizes their position and experience with respect to their racialized masculinity rather than vilifies them in opposition to Japanese American soldiers.

<sup>19</sup> The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) and its leader, Mike Masaoka, were instrumental in collaborating with the War Relocation Authority (WRA) in the incarceration of people of Japanese ancestry. They represented the loyal, die-hard Japanese Americans who gave concessions of their liberties and rights to prove their loyalty and were particularly in opposition to the draft resisters. The JACL’s strategy was to “prove to the rest of the nation that the Nisei were true and loyal Americans, free from the pull of any foreign allegiance: Japanese on the outside, American on the inside” (Muller 13). Furthermore, they “were consistent in urging the army to reinstitute selective service for Japanese American young men [because] the notion was that the Nisei battlefield sacrifices would help insure a future for the Japanese American people” (Daniels 5).

<sup>20</sup> John Okada’s *No-No Boy* is an excellent portrayal of a draft resister who experienced a very similar situation where his courage, patriotism, and manhood were questioned by the JACL and other Japanese Americans.

to a white male normativity of the U.S military, which reflected the hegemonic norms of American society. By refusing conscription, the draft resisters were infantilized, labeled as cowards, and projected as gay, and these descriptions effeminized the draft resisters as not “real men.” However, the Japanese American draft resisters rejected that their perceived masculinity was analogous to a “crybaby, a coward, and a fairy” by demonstrating their bravery not through military heroism but through their heroism in challenging the U.S. military.

In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt changed the status<sup>21</sup> of Nisei Selective Service registrants, barring them from conscription due to their perceived racial threat to the U.S. military. The U.S. government assigned Japanese American men the designation of IV-C or IV-F, the category for “aliens not acceptable to the armed forces, or any group of persons not acceptable” (Muller 41). The new denotation offended the Japanese American men because the U.S. military and government did not discern whether or not they were viewed as “aliens” or “group of persons not acceptable,” yet as legal scholar Eric Muller notes, “it certainly looked to the Nisei as though, in the eyes of the military, they were suddenly less than full citizens” (Muller 41). Moreover, the classifications<sup>22</sup> for Selected Service designated the Japanese American men as physically incapable of being an American soldier because an IV-F

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<sup>21</sup> On January 5, 1942, the U.S. government excluded Japanese Americans from conscription. However, the U.S. government decided to form a Japanese American unit because of its propaganda value to combat “Japanese propaganda in the Far East that it was fighting a racial war and defending Asia against the forces of Caucasian imperialism” (Muller 46). The loyalty questionnaire was issued to determine the loyalty of the potential Japanese American soldiers. The creation of the segregated unit (first the 100<sup>th</sup> and then the 442<sup>nd</sup>) was approved and registration teams went to the incarceration camps and Hawaii to recruit Japanese American men. In order to replenish the ranks of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup>, the War Department reinstated conscription of Japanese Americans on January 20, 1944 (Muller 64).

<sup>22</sup> The classifications for Selective Service were I-A, I-B, or IV-F/IV-C. I-A represented the “cream of the crop” in terms of physical and mental fortitude. I-B was a step below I-A with some physical and mental deficiencies. IV-F was deemed unacceptable for military service (Jarvis 59).

classification was deemed a “complete physical wreck” and is “someone who is cowardly and impotent” (Jarvis 60). The description of IV-F status positioned Japanese American men as incompetent due to their perceived physical limitations and it disputed the physicality of the Japanese American male potential to be fighting American soldiers. This undermined their U.S. citizenship because it prevented them from demonstrating their citizenship through soldiering. By challenging their fighting prowess, the IV-F attacked the masculine vigor of Japanese American men because of a perceived defect, which in this case were their racialized bodies.

When the War Department formally announced its new policy<sup>23</sup> of drafting eligible Japanese American men in the incarceration camps and Hawaii on January 20, 1944, President Roosevelt based the decision on “the principle on which this country was founded and by which it has always been governed...that Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry” and that the Japanese American should not “be denied the democratic right to exercise the responsibilities of his citizenship, regardless of race” (Muller 41). This statement deeply contrasts the racialized masculinity of Japanese American men with the ideals of U.S. citizenship. Since the U.S. military perpetuated “U.S. superiority and its supposed masculine right to dominate ‘lesser’ nations and peoples,” in this case, it is not particularly a foreign enemy but a “foreign” looking American citizen population (Jarvis 131). The U.S. military was a predominantly white corps, and by issuing a proclamation that America and the U.S. military was based upon an “America” of the heart and mind,

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<sup>23</sup> The War Department and the Office of War Information felt that a segregated Japanese American unit held important propaganda value to combat the Japan’s response that they were fighting a racial war and defending Asia against white Imperialism (Muller 46). Thus, the War Department reversed the previous ineligible classification of Nisei men and not only accepted them as volunteers but reinstated the draft.



the U.S. seemed to promise Japanese American men that they would be fully accepted as “Japanese American men” if they agreed to conscription. The U.S. military maintained white male hegemony, and the oppression of Japanese American men only reinforced the legitimacy of white male normativity.

The WRA, with assistance from the JACL tried in vain to question the loyalty and masculinity of Japanese American draft resisters by parading the war hero Technical Sergeant Ben Kuroki<sup>24</sup> in the Heart Mountain and Minidoka incarceration camps. Kuroki epitomized everything that the draft resisters seemingly were not: a martial, loyal American citizen. When Kuroki visited the Heart Mountain incarceration camp, the JACL gave him a “hero’s welcome” and flaunted him around the incarceration camp in order to incite a patriotic fervor and to humiliate the draft resistance. Kuroki served as a puppet for the WRA and JACL, and the leaders of the Fair Play Committee<sup>25</sup> understood they were being manipulated. In response to Kuroki’s arrival, Frank Emi, the leader of the Fair Play Committee, believed that Kuroki “never knew anything about the camp, never was forced out of his home. I don’t think he had, really, any business coming into these camps, trying to get as many people into the army as possible” (Chin 434). Even though Kuroki’s visit to the two incarceration camps symbolized one avenue for Japanese American men to re-assert their citizenship, in the following month, eleven Japanese

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<sup>24</sup> Technical Sergeant Ben Kuroki was a “Nebraska farm boy who had managed to buck the army’s anti-Japanese prejudices and serve heroically on an air corps bomber for their perilous missions in the European theater” (Muller 73). Kuroki served both in the European and Pacific theater and even flew bombing missions over Japan (Chin 469). Kuroki was able to serve in the U.S. Air Force because “individual officers were given the responsibility of deciding on discharges or retention” for Japanese American soldiers (Castelnuovo 13).

<sup>25</sup> The Fair Play Committee was organized in the Heart Mountain incarceration camp by Japanese Americans who wanted to protest the injustices and unconstitutionality of their forcible removal and incarceration. The FPC was led by Kiyoshi Okamoto and Frank Emi and they took up the issue of conscription. The FPC’s goals include the education of their fellow Japanese Americans of their rights and protest of conscription. They played an intimate role in the draft resistance at Heart Mountain (Emi 53).

American men resisted the draft in Minidoka, and the Heart Mountain resisters would eventually number eighty-five (Muller 74, 92).

Although Kuroki and his family never experienced incarceration, he was deeply upset when he heard about the court cases of the draft resisters: “These men are Fascists in my estimation and no good to my country. They have torn down all the rest of us tried to do. I hope that these members of that Fair Play Committee won’t form the opinion of America concerning all Japanese Americans” (Chin 452). This statement evokes similar sentiments about citizenship made by the rescued men of the “Lost Battalion.” Although not explicitly degrading them through a racial slur, Kuroki compares the draft resisters with Fascists or the enemy. Through this dichotomy of Democracy=U.S.A and Fascists=Germany, Italy, and Japan, Kuroki suggests that the draft resisters are detrimental to the struggle for Japanese American recognition as men who are willing to assume the responsibility of citizenship by accepting conscription and then sacrifice their lives in combat. Unlike the Japanese American draft resisters, Kuroki’s masculinity and citizenship were never questioned as a loyal Japanese American soldier.

Similar to Ben Kuroki, Min Yasui,<sup>26</sup> a folk hero among the Nisei due to his battle with the government over the constitutionality of Japanese American incarceration, changed his position on conscription from opposition to avid support, and castigated the draft resisters for their stance. Yasui advocated that the “Nisei must demonstrate our willingness to assume fully and patriotically the obligations of citizenship” and prove “their American loyalty on the battlefield” (Muller 69). However, the Japanese American

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<sup>26</sup> Min Yasui became a test case to determine the constitutionality of the removal of people of Japanese ancestry. His action drew the ire of the JACL and was mocked as a “self-styled martyr” and even questioned his loyalty to America. Yasui was a reserve officer in the U.S. Army and switched sides in support of the JACL and conscription (Muller 68-9).

draft resisters represented the opposite of Yasui's vision for acceptance. Within the incarceration camps, the draft resisters were scorned as disloyal for refusing conscription. Yasui believed that resisting conscription illustrated not only their lack of patriotism but also their craven persona. JACL leader Mike Masaoka believed that the Japanese American eligible men "must prove to all who question that we are ready and willing to die for the one country we know and pledge allegiance to" (Muller 43). By choosing not to sacrifice their lives as American soldiers, Masaoka positioned the draft resisters as cowards and deemed as inferior to the heroism of the Japanese American soldiers. Furthermore, their objection to conscription only facilitated the idea that they were un-American and un-masculine because they would not sacrifice their lives like the Japanese American soldiers, and more importantly, they undermined the campaign to promote a "loyal Japanese American" image.

The Japanese American draft resisters knew that the U.S. military's reinstatement of the Selected Service was yet another ploy to exploit a marginalized community burdened by the racial animosity spurred by the war. Arguing that "reinstatement of Selective Service means placing loyal persons of Japanese ancestry on the same basis as all others subject to the draft," the Japanese American draft resisters did not feel like full-fledged American citizens due to conscription (Muller 61). Gene Akutsu, a draft resister from Minidoka, felt that the "treatment at the hands of his government had 'proven to him that he is a Japanese, no longer an American citizen'" (Muller 71). Furthermore, the Japanese American draft resisters interpreted conscription "as an 'exterminating measure' for Japanese Americans" (Muller 63). Like the Japanese American soldiers, whose heroic actions were downplayed due to their racialization as Japanese, the Japanese

American draft resisters did not want to participate in sacrificing their lives for an American democracy and white American male hegemony that stripped them of their constitutional rights as citizens. The draft resisters Frank Inouye, a draft resister from Heart Mountain, complained about the “degradation and discrimination suffered by earlier Nisei draftees in the Army [,]... assailed the U.S. government for the enforced mass eviction...and ridiculed the irony of the government now asking these same victims to shed blood for America” (Hansen 96). Inouye, like other draft resisters, did not want to “shed blood for America,” and while the act of “shedding blood” evokes a masculine and militaristic ethos, by resisting conscription they asserted a masculinity that ran counter to both the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> and white American male hegemony. The Japanese American draft resisters demonstrated they would not be deployed due to their infringement of rights as U.S. citizens.

With the creation of the Fair Play Committee, Japanese American draft resisters were given a forum and space to advocate their marginalized position. Akutsu believed that the U.S. government “had been kicking us around a lot” and the draft resisters were “not going to stand for that’ any longer” (Muller 72). By taking a personal affront to the conscription, the Japanese American draft resisters were standing up for what they believed in. Furthermore, the Japanese American draft resisters demanded that the American government “recognize [them] as citizens, they said, and we will gladly serve in the army; but we will not serve in the army to persuade you to recognize us as citizens” (Muller 45). Through this ultimatum, the Japanese American draft resisters were well aware of the implications of the U.S. military as a site that reinforced the masculine prowess of America while inscribing the virtues of citizenship. This acknowledgement

subsequently influenced many Japanese American draftees to skip their physical exam and challenge their induction into military service. By resisting a physical, the Japanese American draft resisters opposed the manipulation of their bodies to conform to an American “soldier masculinity.” They were constructing a masculinity not predicated upon white masculine bodies but a masculinity founded upon the belief that they would sacrifice their bodies to uphold the rights of American citizens rather than on the battlefield. When the Japanese American draftees resisted, “weeks would pass—weeks in which the resister would remain in camp, circulating among his fellow internees as a living symbol of the government’s apparent inaction and lack of resolve” (Muller 88).<sup>27</sup> This small victory signaled to not only the Japanese American draft resisters but also the rest of the Japanese American community in the camps that they were able to successfully defy the American government. By claiming a particular masculinity and U.S. citizenship on their own terms, the Japanese American draft resisters’ actions spoke to the fact that they would not comply with the U.S. military’s idea of masculinity and citizenship.

The Japanese American draft resisters refused conscription in order to assert their U.S. citizenship by claiming a racialized masculinity that was divergent from white male normativity. Through their racial masculinity being attacked as evidence above that positioned the draft resisters as incompetent, cowardly, and disloyal, the U.S. military with the assistance of the JACL invalidated their worth as American citizens. However through their resistance, the Japanese American draft resisters constructed a racialized

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<sup>27</sup> The U.S. military needed the Japanese American draft resisters to both fail to show up for their physicals and fail to be inducted into the military in order to effectively prosecute the draft resisters. Hence, there was a period, sometimes weeks, between the physical and the induction (Muller 88).

masculinity upheld by the principle of defending the rights of citizens. Their demonstration of counter-hegemonic actions through their resistance and conviction, allowed the Japanese American draft resisters to endorse an alternative construction of U.S. citizenship and masculinity, which solidified their identities as “Japanese American men,” on their own terms.

Imprisoned Masculinity: Japanese American Prisoners of War in Europe and the Pacific

“I pulled myself up rigid to attention, threw my chest out and held my head up high. I would show these native Japanese what a Japanese-American was made of” – Frank “Foo” Fujita

“I looked back on my days in America, where sometimes I was not treated as a true American, and now, here in Japan, I realized that I was not considered a true Japanese either. It was as though I did not really belong to either country” –Iwao Peter Sano

While their loved ones were imprisoned in the internment camps on the continental United States or subjected to racial discrimination in Hawaii, some Japanese American soldiers were captured by the enemy—Nazi Germans and Japanese. Escaping the harsh realities of incarcerated life in the States, these Japanese American soldiers found themselves in another imprisoned state.<sup>28</sup> This section largely draws upon the memoirs and memories of Japanese American prisoners of war both in the European campaign and the Pacific theater. I will not indiscriminately treat both experiences with the same lens because the racial dynamics in both contexts differ in many respects. The Japanese American soldiers captured in Europe faced a reality that they were racially different than their Nazi German captors and Russian allies. In the Pacific, Japanese

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<sup>28</sup> On a side note, the Japanese Americans soldiers of the 522<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery Battalion, an attachment of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team, were the first ones to the Dachau concentration camp in Germany but were not allowed to enter the camps first. Historian Pierre Moulin notes “the intelligence of the U.S. army wanted to avoid the publicity and the connection between the two concentration camps” (94). Their main unit liberated one of the 169 Dachau’s sub-camps. In Moulin’s self-published book *Dachau, Holocaust, and US Samurais: Nisei Soldiers First in Dachau?* reveals through personal interviews with both Japanese American soldiers of the 522<sup>nd</sup> and Dachau survivors of the suppressed memories of their interactions. This small historical event highlights the imprisoned status of both the German Jews and the Japanese American soldiers.

American soldiers imprisoned by the Japanese were forced to cope with the bending of racial ideologies between the West and Japan due to the fact that they were phenotypically Japanese.

Though their families and themselves were incarcerated, I assert that the Japanese American prisoners of war were able to find spaces where they could resist emasculation and racism and exert an identity that was uniquely “Japanese American.” The story of this specific group of Japanese American soldiers has been at times overshadowed by the dominant narrative of Japanese American soldiers and their patriotism in the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team. In many accounts, their capture by the enemy invalidated their worth as soldiers because many of the Japanese American prisoners of war expressed sentiments of shame. In this section, I reveal that their experiences and actions within the confines of an imprisoned state, the Japanese American prisoners of war were capable of resisting forms of racism, emasculation, and questioning of citizenship by employing an alternative connotation of “American.”

In this section, I will particularly scrutinize two forms of text—personal narratives and memoirs—to extrapolate knowledge from the experiences of Japanese American prisoners of war. All of the personal narratives of Japanese American prisoners of war that I have analyzed are written forty years after their captivity in enemy territory. Though the memoirs are the memories of Japanese American POWs, there are many political agendas that underlie the very “truth” of their experiences. By writing a memoir, I believe these former Japanese American POWs are able to re-masculinize their experience as prisoners through the reclamation of *their* history. The insertion of their “truth” via a memoir affords them a place in history where they are in control rather than



in captivity of the dominant historical narrative. George W. Egerton notes that memoirs are “recording of events from a privileged vantage point” and this privileging silences other experiences and perspectives (5). This privilege is also rooted in personal interest and pride, which influences the portrayal of events in a particular vantage point. However, these Japanese American POW voices are already a marginalized and silenced community because their own experiences are overshadowed by the larger dominant narrative of the patriotic, battle-weary Japanese American war veteran with accolades of heroic feats. The insertion of these voices into the master narrative of Japanese American soldiers will provide yet another facet of understanding the experiences of Japanese Americans during the war.

While battling Nazi forces in the Vosges Mountains in 1944, some of the men of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team were captured, and through analyzing their interactions with the Nazis I reveal conflicting constructions of the Japanese Americans’ race, citizenship, and masculinity. Stanley Akita, a former Japanese American POW, acknowledged that while held by the Nazis, “they were wondering why we as Japanese were fighting so hard for the United States when Japan was their ally”<sup>29</sup> (Coach 21). During an interrogation by Nazi captors, Akita was asked many questions ranging from “Did you go to Japanese School?” to “Do you like America?” which fundamentally aimed to undermine and question the loyalty and commitment of Akita. His Japanese American body stood as an anomaly for the Germans. Through their probing of Akita’s

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<sup>29</sup> Stanley Akita was born in Honomu on the Big Island of Hawaii and was part of the reinforcements for the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team. Volunteering in 1943, Akita was sent to Camp Shelby in Mississippi and was then subsequently sent to Italy and northeast France. After liberating the town of Biffontaine in France, Akita was captured by Nazi Germans (Akita 203-4).

intentions, the German interrogators were only met with stoic responses supporting the American war machine. One question that poignantly captured the tense exchange culminated with: “Did you know that a cat born in the fish market isn’t a fish” in reference to Akita’s apparent exclusion from the dominant American society. Akita’s steadfast response was “Yes, but he belongs to the fish market” (Akita 208-9). This wish to belong and associate himself with America and American forces in Europe vis-à-vis the German captor created a yearning desire for him to assume qualities inherent of a white male American soldier. While in captivity, this relationship between enemy and ally became a firm stronghold in maintaining the loyalty of the Japanese American participation in the war effort. By indiscriminately believing in their acceptance as “true” American soldiers, Japanese American prisoners survive their captivity by believing in their assertion as American.

Similarly to the conversations exposing the racial and masculine disparities between the men of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> and the “Lost Battalion” of the Texas Battalion in the Vosges Mountains, the German captors also viewed their Japanese American POWs as inferior opponents. For the Nazis, their construction of masculinity was grounded in the mentality of an ideal state of manhood through physical superiority. Adolf Hitler defined this form of masculinity as an “idea that healthy and strong bodies conveyed both beauty and power” and also “viewed physical imperfection as a source of shame” (Jarvis 45). By characterizing masculinity through the portrayal of physically elite specimens, Nazi soldiers were indoctrinated to believe that they should “embody strength and racial pride and represent a new, mechanized man—the ultimate man of steel—who will surely be victorious in the next war” (Jarvis 45). Though the encounter of Japanese American

soldiers in France justified and legitimated the superiority of the Nazis, it also brought an inquisitive exchange because Japan was Germany's ally: "[The Nazis] wondered why we, as Japanese, were fighting so hard for the United States when Japan was their ally" (Akita 208). During Akita's tenure in the POW camp in Germany, he was routinely checked for contraband and illicit materials. However, during one particular search, "when the Germans saw [Akita], all he said to the other German was, 'Look at the small soldier,' and without frisking [Akita], he tapped [him] on the head, and passed [him] over" (Coach 29). By describing Akita as a "small soldier" and equating that with his inability to be a threat only supports the understanding that the Japanese American soldiers were not "really" soldiers even in the eyes of the enemy.

The Nazi captors treated the Japanese American POWs in the camps like animals, which signaled their inferiority as soldiers and as American citizens. For Sueo Fujii, his arrangements in the POW camps made it "very difficult to sleep on a hungry belly during [the] cold winter months" and the "health conditions were filthy"<sup>30</sup> (Fujii 48). This type of cruel treatment of Japanese American POWs by the Nazis was common for non-white soldiers captured in the European campaign. It was believed that "the Axis powers and their military commanders in the field calculated, perhaps correctly, that atrocities committed against non-white troops would elicit fewer and milder protests from the Western powers than those inflicted on white men" (Moore 116). This attitude towards non-white Allied soldiers gestures to the fact that even the Axis powers viewed the non-

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<sup>30</sup> Sueo Fujii was born and raised in Kauai, Hawaii. He volunteered for the Army because he felt it was his duty to serve. Trained as a medic, when Nazi German forces captured Fujii, he was placed in a hospital to care for the wounded and sick U.S. soldiers. During World War II, many people from Kauai were interned in camps in Oahu and the mainland. Fujii said that "after he got out of the military he discovered that his father fought in the Russian War so there was concern that he was working for Japan" (Coach 44).

white Allied soldiers as not worthy and subordinate to the white Allied soldiers. By dehumanizing the Japanese American prisoners of war and other prisoners of color, the white Axis soldiers were able to wage war “against subhuman vermin [who] ‘has no honor’” (Brough 155). Michael Brough explains that soldiers during a military conflict assume different qualities about their enemies and dehumanize them in order to cope with their murderous acts (155). By positioning their enemies—Japanese Americans and soldiers of color—as soldiers lacking “honor,” this denotation facilitates the movement away from a humanistic comprehension of their opposition to a more animalistic perception. This very situation exposes that their masculinity is designated as neither worthy of honor nor proper for a human being.

During the rescue of the “Lost Battalion, the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> captured several hundred Nazi POWs, and their interactions with each other showed the complexity of citizenship and racialized masculinity projected onto the bodies of the Japanese American soldiers. One Nazi POW said, “The Vosges must be like the jungle where [the Japanese American soldiers] were born, I guess. They were perfectly used to moving around in the forest” (Duus 172). This quotation directly illuminates the Nazi attitude that the masculinity and fighting prowess of the Japanese American soldiers evolved from their jungle-like birthplace. By linking Japanese American soldiers to a primitive origin, the Nazi POW justified his capture. Another Nazi POW asked, “How come you’re fighting for America?” and “What makes you feel like an American” (Croft 183). Through the Nazi POW’s confusion, the questions evoke the notion that the Germans don’t even view the Japanese American soldiers as American soldiers/citizens. The Nazi response to the Japanese American presence in the European campaign only complicated the Japanese

American understanding of masculinity and citizenship. By acknowledging the primitive fighting advantage and questioning their allegiance to America, the Nazi responses expose the fact that both the enemy and their fellow white American soldiers viewed them similarly.

The guilt associated with being captured and the relegation as a prisoner of war became an insurmountable burden that challenged the masculinity of Japanese American prisoners of war. The experiences and sentiments felt by Japanese American prisoners of war is similar to the phenomenon called survivor guilt, which “articulates that which remains unburied, the trauma that refuses to be completely buried even as its adequate representation presents a certain impossibility” (Kim 114). Stanley Akita “felt guilty that he was alive and he felt worthless,” and “after the war, he recalls feeling like he was not good enough so he worked harder and harder to feel worthy” (Coach 12). This awareness as an undeserving and unqualified soldier directly buttresses Akita’s belief of his inefficacy as a soldier and thus an American citizen. Similar to the atomic bomb survivors, “passing conjures not only the specter of phenotypical difference, but also questions about what constitutes a whole, undamaged body. This, too, is the trauma and burden of having survived—the twinned psychic and physical scars” (Kim 115). When Harry H. Kamikawa, another Japanese American POW, was captured by the Nazi forces, he felt that “with old fashioned ideas from our upbringing, [I] felt like we lost our dignity and felt *haji*,” which is a form of Japanese shame (Coach 84). This particular form of shame is yet another example of the constant erosion of Akita’s self-reflection of his worth as a soldier and an American.

Like Kamikawa, Akira Morikawa felt that he was a “failure” for being captured and “felt guilty knowing he was safe and other men were on the front lines dodging bullets. He felt that he did not do what he joined the Army to do. He did not feel that he was truly a veteran because he had not done anything to warrant that title” (Coach 59). These sentiments expressed by Morikawa underlie the very ideological fabric that the Japanese American soldiers were projected to accomplish in the European campaign. Positioned by the reinforcing thought that their sacrifice on the battlefield would translate into heroic and first-class citizenship labels back home in the United States, Morikawa’s marginalized place in the war only compound the growing pressure to personify a “masculine American soldier.” Morikawa was forced to occupy a space where the Japanese American community deems him dishonorable and endure the horrors of Nazi German captivity.

The Nazi Germans were not the only soldiers who questioned the nationality and citizenship of the Japanese American soldiers; Russian forces liberated Japanese American soldiers from their prisoner camps and their misunderstandings of the Japanese American soldiers was yet another instance of this ambiguous masculinity. Harry H. Kamikawa, a Japanese American from Hawaii, witnessed a terrible occurrence that created a dilemma about his “loyalty” to the Allied Nations.<sup>31</sup> Kamikawa “experienced the most traumatic episode of his life. Since he is of Asian ancestry, he looked like a

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<sup>31</sup> Harry Kamikawa was born in Ewa on the island of Oahu. Kamikawa enlisted in the U.S. Army when he was nineteen years old and rose to the rank of Buck Sergeant. He was stationed at Camp Shelby in Mississippi, and while in the South, Kamikawa recalled that “he experienced prejudice because of his ancestry but he coped with it because of what he was there for” (Coach 69).

Mongolian soldier<sup>32</sup> and was singled out by the Russian soldiers and interrogated repeatedly because they thought he was a deserter from the Russian army” (Coach 71-2). Through this examination of Kamikawa’s phenotypic-Asian body, questions concerning his fighting prowess and citizenship are revealed. The Russians also repeatedly harassed Kamikawa and was struck “with a bayonet in his ribs many times and described how he was shoved around and had a gun put to his head on several occasions” (Coach 72). Although Kamikawa was subjected to these humiliating actions, “the only thing that saved him was his fellow soldiers. They were able to convince the Russians that he was an American soldier” (Coach 72). Though this persuasion was a success, Kamikawa’s treatment draws upon the notion of Japanese American soldierly masculinity. By associating with the Mongolians, Kamikawa was implicated in the subordinate role of Mongolians in the Russian’s agenda in Asia. Historian Stephen Kotkin notes that the Mongolian forces were “encouraged and then discarded as instruments of Stalin’s opportunistic expansionism” (138). Similarly to the deployment of Japanese Americans as cannon fodder as demonstrated with their rescue of the “Lost Battalion” in the Vosges Mountains, the Mongolians were situated as disposable military resources. Hence, the total lack of reverence for the Mongolians was shifted onto the body of Kamikawa.

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<sup>32</sup> On August 10, 1945, Mongolia declared war on Japan and joined the Soviet Union in their attack of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. One of the largest attacks by Mongolian soldiers with the Soviet military took place against Japanese forces stationed in Chinese Manchuria, and over 80,000 Mongolian calvarymen took part in the assault. The campaign was in large part to achieve international recognition of their efforts in the war (Kotkin 164).

In the Pacific theater, Frank “Foo” Fujita,<sup>33</sup> a Japanese American from Texas, became a prisoner of war for the Imperial Japanese Army, and through his experiences in the POW camps, his racialized body and masculinity are exposed.<sup>34</sup> With little sustenance and poor conditions in the camps, Fujita shrank to a self-described “90-pound weakling, plagued with malnutrition and no fat or strength resources” (Fujita 173). His stature at the time did not model the ideal “masculine warrior” with protruding muscles and colossal height. By confessing that his condition during his time in the camps as a “weakling,” this comment fails to challenge his comprehension of his Japanese American masculinity. Even though he may have conceded that his bodily frame would not be “masculine” in regard to U.S. masculine ideals, Fujita was persistent in maintaining a type of masculinity that is not Japanese but distinctly American. This desire to project an “American” masculinity is noted by Josh Tosh who explains that “in order for the state to have a secure control of the means of violence, there must be a reliable stream of recruits into the armed forces with the appropriate values and capacities” (49). These characteristics are what Fujita yearns to replicate and believes that his conduct during his imprisonment warrants the same honor as the heroic white American soldiers. However,

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<sup>33</sup> Although roughly six thousand Japanese Americans saw military service in the war against Japan, serving as either interpreters or translators, two Japanese Americans were imprisoned by the Japanese in the Pacific Theater. Sergeant Frank Fujita in Java and Richard Sakakida in the Philippines were captured. Furthermore, “Fujita’s family was fortunate to escape the indignities of a ‘relocation center’ and his relatives in Japan were careful to conceal their relationship to him even while apparently acknowledging secretly his presence in a nearby POW camp” (Fujita XI).

<sup>34</sup> In this part of the section, the experiences of Sergeant Frank Fujita are from his memoir entitled *Foo A Japanese-American Prisoner of the Rising Sun: The Secret Prison Diary of Frank “Foo” Fujita*. The memoir draws from Fujita’s secret diary, which served as evidence for prosecutors in the post-war War Crimes trials held in Tokyo (Fujita XVII).



Fujita does not realize that he can never be a masculine white U.S. soldier because of his phenotypic appearance as a small “90-pound weakling.”

While Fujita inhabited the camps, his very notions of Japanese masculinity through the gaze of a western, white masculine viewpoint were tested. Fujita acknowledged the fact that “when the war first started we were told that all Japanese were little bitty runts but soon after we were captured there was a detachment of Imperial Marines...[and] each one of these marines were between six and seven feet tall” (Fujita 162). This insight reveals the ignorance and misjudgment of Fujita because he did not note at all that his father is Japanese. His utter blindness of believing this stereotype while neglecting to realize that he is Japanese only solidifies Fujita’s lack or unwillingness to accept his racialized state. Fujita’s perceptions of Japanese masculinity are altered but at the same time don’t affect his own understanding of his Japanese body. His exposure to the taller Japanese soldiers shattered his Americanized idea of Japanese “masculinity” in the form of body type. However, Fujita does not have an epiphany that his stature resembles the same “little bitty runts” in reference to the Japanese soldiers. This omission or unconscious realization demonstrates the fact that Fujita blindly believes in his “superiority” as an American, and at times a *white* American.

When the Japanese guards recognize the fact that Fujita is part Japanese, the Japanese strive to re-indoctrinate Fujita in the “Japanese ways.” However, Fujita is adamant that “if they [referring to the Japanese captors] could not sway me, being part Japanese, over to their side, then perhaps they would not be too eager to attempt the same thing with others who were not Japanese. I had to prove to all the POWs I was thrown in with that I was 100 percent American” (Fujita 183). This yearning to be “100 percent

American” was complicated because in the eyes of the Japanese captors, his Japanese phenotype bars him from American citizenship. Furthermore, the Japanese captors took a vested interest in breaking Fujita to submit to his “Japanese” ways and discard any trace of his “white” American soldierly masculinity. Once Fujita was revealed to be Japanese, the Japanese captors were “content with harassing me and making me stand at attention for long periods of time and making me bow to them repeatedly” (174). This form of submission to the captors only validates the notion that Fujita’s Japanese body served as a constant reminder of the racial conflict between the *white* West and Japan.

During one exchange, Fujita was particularly singled out from the other POWs and was subjected to a brutal beating. However, Fujita was determined to resist this humiliating event: “I pulled myself up rigid to attention, threw my chest out and held my head up high. I would show these native Japanese what a Japanese-American was made of” (177). By projecting a distinctly “Japanese-American” worth in defiance of the Japanese captors, Fujita’s actions points to an alternative means of being that he fails to acknowledge. With regard to the creation of an alternative connotation of manhood, Tosh notes “Many features of the dominant masculinity will be imposed on other social groups...but subordinate groups have been structured around their own masculine codes which may vary significantly from those at the top” (49). Fujita’s unwavering belief that he is upholding the standards of a perceived “American soldier,” is contradicted by the fact that he is Japanese-American, not American. The hyphen impedes his desire to

become fully incorporated even though Fujita at times fruitlessly tries to achieve the status as a “100 percent American soldier.”<sup>35</sup>

Frank Fujita’s persistent projections of being a “100 percent American soldier” were troubled when he comes into contact with Japanese subjects while naked in the bathhouse. While bathing in the nude, Fujita witnessed the fact that “everyone in town, as well as some from the surrounding area, came down to the bath house on POW night to view these naked men” (Fujita 138). Fujita noticed that “the men would stare with unbelieving eyes, and the women would giggle and both sexes would say “*Òkii! Òkii!* (Big! Big!).” Moreover, Fujita in his memoir proceeds to describe that “*We POWs made no attempt to conceal ourselves and there were some that displayed truly monumental organs*” [emphasis added] (Fujita 138). By assuming the position of phallic superiority with the other white POWs, Fujita ignores his own racialized difference by conveniently aligning his own imagined physical masculine prowess with the *white* POWs. Through his refusal to address his own penis, Fujita’s direct invisibility reveals a desire to believe that he is a white American soldier. This resolute position distinctly creates a binary of enemy and ally through the maintenance of a white male America soldier masculinity at the center.

While imprisoned, Fujita’s encounter with an American POW who betrayed his unit and aided the Japanese becomes a foil for Fujita’s character in terms of his masculinity. A white American soldier named Sergeant Provoo whose nickname donned by the men of the camp is “The Traitor of Corregidor” and he represents the antithetical

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<sup>35</sup> David Eng describes the hyphen discussion as a term that reflects “on a grammatical level cultural nationalism’s desire to eschew the notion of a split subjectivity while claiming the uniqueness of Asian American identity as “whole” and wholly viable within the space of the nation-state” (211).

ideals of Fujita. One of the men in the camp explains to Fujita that “Provoo had spent time in Japan, studying Japanese and the Shinto religion and was some sort of minor priest in the Shinto sect” (192). When Sergeant Provoo and his unit were surrounded and captured, “Provoo donned his Shinto robes and...greeted the Japanese landing force and offered his services”<sup>36</sup> (192). This reversal of roles where Sergeant Provoo “becomes” Japanese and disregards his obligations as a citizen and soldier is in stark contradiction to Fujita’s character in his pursuit to become a legitimate masculine U.S. soldier. When the Japanese officials sought to employ Fujita as a tool in their propaganda campaign by forcing Americans to speak on the radio on behalf of the Japanese Empire, Fujita did not comply with their demands. Fujita concluded that “I was already writing such juvenile stuff that it was completely unusable” for broadcast and that he “had misgivings and problems with our conscience about writing anything for an enemy nation” (203).

This comparison between Sergeant Provoo and Fujita offers a special example of the oppositions of masculinity, race, and citizenship. Sergeant Provoo, a white American soldier, denounced his American citizenship and became a Japanese informant and soldier. Through his actions of donning Shinto robes, his defiant behavior on one level is summoning upon the notion that the Japanese religion is a more superior religion than its U.S. counterpart. On another level, Provoo’s exertions implicate that his “white” body is subservient to the Japanese masculine ideal. This type of masculinity in this context refers to the presumed dominance of Japan over its conquered peoples.

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<sup>36</sup> Provoo was accused of numerous treasonable actions, including the assistance of executing Captain Burton C. Thompson on Corregidor. Provoo was held in federal court in 1952-1953, and he was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. However, Provoo was released due to procedural and constitutional grounds (Kerr 73, 298).

Besides Fujita who sacrificed for the United States, Iwao Peter Sano was a Japanese American who fought for the Imperial Japanese Army. Though Fujita witnessed his own racial difference and masculinity in relation to his Japanese captors and white POW comrades, Sano is a different character who becomes indoctrinated in the Japanese warrior mentality while conflicting with his American background. Sano was inducted into the Imperial Japanese Army because he was forced by his parents to live in Japan with his Uncle's household. In the Japanese culture, the custom of *yooshi*<sup>37</sup> obliged Sano to travel to Japan in order to maintain his Uncle's lineage. Sano's "real" father was torn by observing this custom and Sano believed that "at that moment my father could have fought against custom, reneged on his promise, and taken back Iwao" but decided to comply with the simple proverb: "The deadliest foe to love is custom" (Sano xiii).

During Sano's initial growth and education in Japan, Sano is reluctant and disagreeable with the Japanese culture, which was a stark difference from his Japanese American lifestyle. While being paraded around his Uncle's town when Sano arrives in Japan, Sano finds himself uncomfortable with the formalities in this strange country. In order to "pass," Sano tries "hard to be Japanese. [Sano] even bowed my head as [he] said 'Thank you' and 'Goodbye'" (Sano 22). Though a valiant attempt to become Japanese, Sano throughout his time in Japan still views his identity as part American. When the United States declares war on Japan, Sano is conflicted because his loyalty to each nation is questioned. Sano's self reflects about the military struggle:

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<sup>37</sup> The custom of *yooshi* means literally "a son to be nurtured." The practice of *yooshi* is when "a son of a relative or of a close friend is given up for adoption to a childless man and woman to be nurtured, to bear their name, and to inherit their birthright" (Sano xii).

I eagerly waited for the day I would be drafted to serve my country (Japan). Eagerly? Perhaps. Was my feeling one of true patriotism or a sense of duty, knowing that I had no other choice in the matter? Memories of my days in California swept through my mind. What are my old friends at school and church doing now? I would be fighting against them this time....I felt pain and wished that things were different....I felt a strong sense of loyalty to Japan, or perhaps I simply acquiesced to the situation in which I found myself (Sano 25).

This constant self-interrogation reveals a constant shift of Sano's understandings of his place within the war between the U.S. and Japan. This vacillating sentiment of loyalty for either Japan or the United States prompts Sano to experience and question his own participation in the war effort for Japan: "I looked back on my days in America, where sometimes I was not treated as a true American, and now, here in Japan, I realized that I was not considered a true Japanese either. It was as though I did not really belong to either country" (Sano 39). By not fully exerting a unified support for either Japan or the United States, Sano occupies this transnational space in limbo that grants him no comfort about his allegiance to a certain nation.

Sano is aware that his peers also view his body in an ambiguous lens because of his Japanese phenotype but his American background. While in the Imperial Japanese Army, Sano was confronted by a Japanese officer who knew of Sano's relationship with the United States, and he gave Sano a "stern warning that I was to work extra hard to prove my loyalty to Japan because of my birthplace" (Sano 38). To cement Sano's commitment to the Japanese cause, the officer concluded by stating that Sano's "parents in America had been sent to a concentration camp and told [Sano] how important it was for [him] to become a good Japanese soldier and fight and even die, if necessary, for Japan" (Sano 38). This reinforcement of Sano's duty to Japan is troubled by his dual identity as both Japanese and American. Sano accepted that he was serving in the

Imperial Japanese Army as an “adopted” Japanese, “but at the same time [he] did not have a strong sense that Americans were my enemy” (Sano 38).

Even Sano’s classmates viewed his American identity as a further form of inferiority in their eyes, which prompted them to comment on his dubious loyalty. Sano was aware that his friends still “looked on [him] as his enemy” and “there were other such occasions when my schoolmates would talk to me as if I were not a Japanese like them but an American” (Sano 39). By subjecting Sano to a subordinate position due to his American heritage, his nationality stands as a form of emasculation even though Sano is ethnically Japanese. Moreover, Sano explains that his classmates would “compare the two countries and say that Japan was superior, implying that they and theirs were better than I and whatever I represented” (Sano 39). By being associated with the United States, his worth as a soldier is questioned. The perceived dominance of the fighting aptitude of the Japanese overshadowed the United States’ militaristic threat. Moreover, Sano’s classmates implicate Sano’s existence with the ever-increasing threat of U.S. forces in the Pacific theater. Though the U.S. military presence in the Pacific became a threatening force, the Japanese strongly believed that they were still capable of defeating the oncoming U.S. attacks.

Although Sano was viewed in a manner that highlighted his American-ness, Sano’s comprehension of English privileged him while in imprisonment. At the end of the war in the Pacific, Japanese forces began to realize their futile struggle to successfully win against Allied invasions. This mentality proliferated the prisoner of war camps in Siberia and the thought that “The invincible Japanese military has gone down in defeat! There must be a lot of changes back home” became increasingly popular (Sano 164).

With this sentiment came the desire to learn English by the Japanese POWs because of the belief that the United States would have a significant role in the shaping of a new Japanese nation. A pilot by the name of Yamamoto approached Sano and conveyed the message that “I think it will be important for us to know English when we get back to Japan because it’s the Americans who are the Occupation Forces” (Sano 162). Sano was the only Japanese American POW in the camp that had the capability to read and write English. By recognizing that Sano held a place of authority, which stemmed from his American roots positioned his own worth in the camp in higher esteem. This turn of events afforded Sano an opportunity to fragment a Japanese masculinity that barred him access while empowering his own marginalized position.

The United States government revoked the U.S. citizenship of Iwao Peter Sano, a Japanese American, because of his participation in the Imperial Japanese Army. Sano’s experiences with both countries in terms of citizenship elucidate the complex predicament of these liminal stateless subjects. When Sano tried to obtain a student visa at the American embassy, they refused to issue him a student visa because they “insisted that I was not really a Japanese citizen and, therefore, could not travel on a Japanese passport, despite the fact that the Japanese government had given me a passport” (Sano 203). This projection was constantly plaguing Sano’s tenure in the Imperial Japanese Army because Sano was convinced that his superior officers and fellow soldiers still believed that his actions were distinctly American. Though providing his body as yet another cog in the Imperial Japanese war machine, his actions were still held in a suspicious light. Furthermore, this instance of the shifting of citizenship speaks to the problem of the national exclusion of Japanese Americans, whether that be in Japan or the



United States. Sano at one point in his life held either a Japanese citizenship or U.S. citizenship but following the end of World War II, Sano finds himself without a citizenship of either nation.

Through his performance of a soldier, Sano is not afforded the same privileges of Japanese soldiers due to his American heritage. Sano becomes a naturalized citizen in 1952 while living in California where he was born and raised (Sano 208). By settling in the United States rather than in Japan implicitly suggests that Sano did not fully feel comfortable in Japan as a Japanese American. Sano describes his adventure and lifelong journey as coming “full circle” and that his inhabitation in the United States with his own Japanese American family is “important to [Sano] as long as [he] lives” (Sano 210). This crossing of citizenship tied to his involvement in the Imperial Japanese Army questions his very own racialized masculinity.

The Japanese American prisoners of war asserted a particular racialized masculinity that reinforced a specific U.S. citizenship that was contradictory to the overarching U.S. citizenship projected by the Japanese and Nazi Germany. Portrayed as racially different and incompatible for the same honor as their white American soldier due to their imprisonment, the Japanese American prisoners of war were able to resist white male hegemony by successfully surviving the cruel conditions of the prison camps. Thus, their actions demonstrated that their citizenship status was uniquely American while resisting popular conceptions of their racialized masculinity and U.S. citizenship.



## Chapter 2: Korean Colonial Subjects during World War II

### The Politics of Imperial Japan: Race and Masculinity

The contradictions and tensions between citizenship and marginalized bodies become salient through the participation of Korean colonial subjects in the Imperial Japanese Army. Drawing on the scholarship of historian Takashi Fujitani who believes that “the military provides a particularly compelling site from which to witness this [contradiction] since the more the Japanese empire came to depend upon the Korean population for soldiers and sailors, the more difficult it became to exclude them” (“Right to Kill”), this section will interrogate the influences of racialized masculinity and the construction and perception of Japanese citizenship through the site of militarized Korean bodies. The desire and lust for a Japanese Empire that incorporated China, Korea, and the Philippines was derailed ideologically because the Japanese war machine was founded upon a strict racial and masculine rhetoric that was not afforded to its “multicultural” subjects (Dower 20).

The Japanese identity during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was founded upon the construction of *Nihonjinron*, the idea of Japanese exceptionalism. By creating the mentality that the Japanese people are a homogenous society, *Nihonjinron* acts as an integral role in maintaining the social order in Japan. The Japanese society projected a “‘perceived homogeneity,’ that is, a belief in homogeneity, regardless of how heterogeneous the reality of Japanese racial makeup may be” (Befu 69). This imagined community summoned its validity from the motivation “to promote a certain cultural conception of Japan” that consumed the presence of Koreans in Japan, whom were deemed of no consequence “because the majority of Koreans [were] culturally and

linguistically so assimilated as to be indistinguishable from Japanese” (Befu 69). This led to the active assimilation of ethnic subjects through a policy called the *Kominka*. The Japanese reasoned that the Koreans and other ethnic groups were “not quite Japanese but perhaps capable of becoming Japanese” (Tsurumi 278). This mentality ushered in the *Kominka* which included a national language movement, a program of name changing, and reforms of native religious and cultural customs, aimed to undermine the fortitude of the Korean culture (Lo 294). In actuality, this ambivalent assimilation of Korean colonial subjects was seen as a threat to the longevity of “Japanese superiority.” The Japanese government stressed for psychological, economical, and strategic reasons that “it was essential that a carefully coordinated policy be adopted for planting Japanese blood on the soil of all Asia, while simultaneously avoiding intermarriage and preserving the purity of the Yamato<sup>38</sup> race” (Dower 265). This contradictory policy in which the active assimilation of Koreans into the Japanese Empire was on one hand, perceived to be a campaign to bridge the two cultures—Japanese and Korean—into a singular bond and on the other, a racial suicide for the Yamato race.

The Japanese society’s perceptions of race and ethnicity are grounded in the appropriation of Western models of race and indigenous conceptions. To justify the engagement of imperialistic policies of Japan during the first half of the twentieth century, Japan greatly realized the potential of the “importation of Western capital and technology, in their construction of a national identity, [and] Japanese ideologues drew inspiration from both the West and through the appropriation and manipulation of indigenous myths” (Weiner 3). The spread of Social Darwinism from the West

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<sup>38</sup> The “Yamato Race” is referring to the bloodline of racially Japanese people.

influenced the actions of Japan in their relationship with other Asian countries. The Japanese government classified that “all civilized states were European in character” and “Japan, by comparison, was depicted as a country in transition from semi-civilized to civilized status” (Weiner 7). Michael Weiner describes this “two-tier narrative of race” as privileging Japan in their conquest to incorporate Asian nations under the banner of a racial project:

The Japanese were thus identified as sharing the same “racial” origins as Chinese and Koreans. None the less, this European-derived narrative of “race” did not preclude the existence of a further definition which identified “race” with nation, and which distinguished imperial Japan, in equally deterministic terms, from its Asian neighbors...The subdivision of human species...imposed a set of obligations on Japan as *Toyo no Meishu* (the leader of Asia). These include not only raising colonial people to a level commensurate with their “natural” abilities, but preserving the essential and superior quality of the Japanese within a carefully delineated hierarchy of “race” (14).

Japan legitimated their claims of imperialism by predicating their argument of a common Asian race on the historical migration of Japanese people from other Asian countries and the inferiority of other Asian nations. Through these beliefs, Japan felt that “responsibility for the regeneration of Asia had fallen to the Japanese by virtue of their innately superior qualities” (Weiner 7). Furthermore, during World War II, “whereas racism in the West was markedly characterized by denigration of others, the Japanese were preoccupied far more exclusively with elevating themselves” (Dower 215). The Japanese government legitimated the annexation of the Korea in 1910 by employing stereotypes that the “Korean people ‘do not possess the Japanese fever for hard work’; they appeared to be ‘slow moving and lazy,’ and they were ‘not as conscious of cleanliness as the Japanese’” (Ryang and Lie 27). By labeling Koreans as distinctly inferior and different from the Japanese, the Koreans became racially subordinate to their

Japanese counterpart. These racial connotations fueled the validation to utilize this minority population as disposable bodies.

During the modernization of Meiji Japan in the late 1800s, the “health of the body was increasingly linked to the health of the nation,” which supported the construction of a masculine Japanese man through the military (Low 83). The military institution provided a firm backbone to supply the Japanese nation with “the norms and standards that represented ideals of manliness” (Low 83). The success of the Sino-Japanese War afforded the Japanese society to put an added emphasis on military heroes and buttress the existing perception of Japanese superiority through a masculine discourse. Many woodblocks prints depicting the Sino-Japanese War showed the Chinese in a “cowardly light, with protruding cheekbones, mouths agape, and effeminate pigtails” while the Japanese were portrayed “more nobly, with European facial features, smart haircuts and military-style moustaches” (Low 83). The Japanese constructed themselves as more masculine than their Asian counterparts like the Chinese and Koreans.

During the rise of Japanese militarism in Asia, the Japanese revitalized the image of the samurai in order to incite a military masculine vigor in its soldiers. The employment of the symbol of the samurai “provided the [Japanese] with a discourse, a cultural resource that could be used from time to time to reinforce their sense of identity and place in the world” (Low 84). This imagery of the samurai transplanted in the minds of the Japanese soldiers only bolstered the “masculine ideologies that linked men to the state and made them sons of the Emperor” (Low 84). These discourses pervaded the hearts and judgments of Japanese soldiers and provided a firm bedrock for the ensuing

racialization and emasculation of Korean colonial subjects in the Japanese Imperial Army.

These constructions of race and masculinity in Japan was yet another mode of maintaining Japanese citizenship. Through a racial lens, Japanese citizenship was granted to those who legitimately had a claim to *Nihonjinrin* and part of the “Yamato Race.” While anything aberrant racially, for instance Korean colonial subjects, were considered racially inferior, which in turn, hindered their acceptance into the Japanese citizenry. Moreover, through a masculine discourse, Japanese citizenship was conferred to those who demonstrated the demeanor of a samurai and a sacrificial stance in defending the Emperor. With the creation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, a Japanese-led campaign to expunge Western influences in Asia and unite the Asian nations under the rule of Japan, the Japanese Imperial Army conquered other Asian nations, which exposed the superiority and masculinity over all “lesser” Asian nations like Korea.

Literary Analysis of Korean Colonial Soldiers: Falsehoods of Japanese Citizenship and Masculinity

Through the works of Oda Makoto's<sup>39</sup> *The Breaking Jewel* published in 1998 and translated into English in 2003, Chang-Rae Lee's<sup>40</sup> *A Gesture Life* published in 1999, and John Young Sohn's<sup>41</sup> memoir entitled *Korean Gakuehi: My Life in the Japanese Army* published in 2007, I have analyzed the text for support of the resistance of the dominant discourse on Japanese masculinity and citizenship. The three literary works afford this research project a perspective of a spectrum of masculinity where Korean colonial soldiers engage a hegemonic construction of Japanese masculinity through their actions ranging from "hypermasculine" actions to less "masculine" behavior while fragmenting and dismantling the very notions of Japanese masculinity.<sup>42</sup> This section particularly focuses on different modes of resistance and highlights the fluidity of masculinity through the lives of Korean colonial soldiers in the Asia-Pacific War.

Though I acknowledge that the literary works were written over 50 years after World War II, the historical legacy of Korean military involvement is still felt in contemporary Japan. These three literary works represent a particular mode of

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<sup>39</sup> Oda Makoto (the proper way to acknowledge in Asia is to place the surname before the given name) was a distinguished writer, activist, and poet. His works concerned the rights of others and especially championed and campaigned for the rights of Koreans residing in Japan. This commitment was spawned from a personal component, his wife held North Korean citizenship even though she was Japanese-born. Oda was instrumental in the policy and legislation for compensations of victims of natural disasters, which directly assisted Koreans who sustained personal loss from the 1995 Kobe earthquake (*The Times*, September 22, 2010).

<sup>40</sup> Chang-Rae Lee is a Creative Writing Professor in the Lewis Center for the Arts at Princeton University. He is a Korean American novelist who was born in Korea in 1965 and immigrated to the United States with his family when he was three years old. Most of his novels involves themes such as alienation, betrayal, and assimilation in the United States ("Mute in an English-Only World")

<sup>41</sup> John Young Sohn was born in Korea in 1923 and attained the rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the Japanese Imperial Army. He immigrated to the United States and received his Ph.D. in linguistics at Indiana University. His devout Christian background is an frequent undertone in his memoir (*Korean Gakuehi*).

<sup>42</sup> What I mean by this spectrum is that in Oda Makoto's *The Breaking Jewel*, the protagonist resists through a "hypermasculine" strategy while in Chang-rae Lee's *A Gesture Life*, the protagonist resists by protecting a Korean comfort woman by sacrificing his life, which is not considered "hypermasculine."



expression to contest and address the repercussions and experiences of Koreans in Japan. Borrowing from analyses of Stephen Crane who wrote *The Red Badge of Courage*, a writer who did not experience military action during the Civil War, but “produced the most memorable account of the feelings of a Civil War soldier in battle,” Oda Makoto and Chang-Rae Lee both are also removed from the first-hand experiences of Korean colonial soldiers during World War II (Brown 89). Robert Shulman discusses that in *The Red Badge of Courage*, “Crane does successfully transform into the universality of art the dominant imagery and much of the inner meaning of an exceptionally troubled era in American life” (Shulman 214). This “American life” that Shulman is commenting on describes the society in which Crane was witnessing during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The novel in return served as a commentary of the affects of the Civil War, and “Crane is both responding to and reflecting on the uncertainty, instability and anxieties of the culture at large, not in a direct but in a deep and subtle way” (Shulman 212). Borrowing from this mentality, I intend to demonstrate that the three authors (two novelists and one memoirist) use their literary work to reflect on the struggles of Koreans in Japan through the timeframe of World War II.

It is important to understand the relationship between historical facts and the field of representation. The three fictional works critique the historical situation of Koreans colonial soldiers during World War II. However, I fully acknowledge the fact that:

For the ethnic...literary critic engaged in historical or cultural analysis, this assumption has an additional consequence: collapsing history and culture into clichéd metanarratives of manipulation and loss, it blindsides the social and personal exceptions, aberrations or justifications that constitute, in many cases, the historical or aesthetic heart of the text in question (Lawrence 12).

By extrapolating knowledge and experience from novels and memoirs, it is a tough process but necessary to not paint a broad picture of the entire minority group.

Knowledge in this sense is qualitative in order to better understand the situation of these two racial minority groups and to subsequently empower their struggle. Moreover, the three different texts deal with three different time periods, in which Oda deals with a Korean soldier during World War II while Sohn and Lee place their protagonist in the present day reflecting on their participation in the Japanese Army. Although the three texts are from different time periods, they all pertain to similar issues of hegemonic masculinity and the inclusionary myth of citizenship. Furthermore, although all three texts involve three different time periods, they were all published around the same time. Through hegemonic masculinity, both Koreans and Japanese Americans were deemed foreign in their respected countries and branded as non-citizens.

In Makoto Oda's *The Breaking Jewel*, the Korean subject is positioned as a volunteer soldier whose character questions the idea of Japanese citizenship in regards to his Japanese counterpart fighting the oncoming wave of American military advancement in the Pacific. The main protagonist is a Japanese soldier named Squad Leader Nakamura and the book chronicles his relationship with a Korean soldier during the Japanese entrenchment in the Pacific islands to ward off the Americans. Throughout the book, Kon, the Korean volunteer, stresses that he, personally, will defeat the American soldiers and will show his true heroic demeanor, which the other "true" Japanese do not show. Kon declares, "I'm going to win," stressing the I, not "We're going to win" (Oda 3). This attitude for a personal victory rather than a collective Japanese victory is due to the discrimination Kon and his family experiences at the hands of the Japanese

oppression, and therefore Kon is adamant about his display of a genuine Japanese soldier. Kon has a personal objective to be seen as a fellow Japanese soldier and longs to be incorporated and accepted into the Japanese society. In this manner, Kon's character exposes the harsh ironies within the Japanese Imperial Army, which ignorantly focuses on the honor and duty aspect of serving the Emperor. Kon explains to Nakamura that "it was because as a Korean, I didn't want to be treated any more with contempt by you Japanese" (Oda 110) "and it was because I didn't want to be treated with contempt when I got killed" (Oda 111). Through Kon's character, the idea of Japanese citizenship during the war is exposed as a hypocritical ideology, which plagues the minds of the Korean soldiers fighting for the Japanese Imperial Army. Moreover, Kon's adamant drive to prove his Japanese worth is depicted in his perseverance to fight until his death. Whereas Nakamura, even though he blindly believes in *gyokusai* or a final act of heroism by sacrificing one's life in battle, avoids death by hiding in a cave while his fellow compatriots died defending the island from the Americans.

The Japanese Imperial Army was structured in a manner which invoked an attitude of masculine superiority in order to encourage a fierce demeanor in battle. With the Japanese soldiers fighting a lost cause defending the island, many of them began to contemplate the luxury of death by telling their fellow comrades, "I want to kill myself. Lend me your hand grenade. Or shoot me with your gun" (Oda 92). In response to these sentiments, the squad leader Nakamura told the men to "at least die like a man. Give three banzais for His Majesty the Emperor, and die decently" (Oda 92). Moreover, when Nakamura discovers Kon's Korean heritage, he automatically thinks that he "probably wants to become a prisoner so you can be saved" and Nakamura personally feels that

“I’m a Japanese. I’m not a Korean like you. I’m not becoming a prisoner” (Oda 109). Nakamura parallels being Japanese as a heroic warrior and being Korean as a cowardly soldier. This denotation as “cowardly” parallels the term “Sick men of East Asia” which referred to the colonized Asian nations by the Japanese. The “Sick men of East Asia” “blamed race as the source of physical and military weakness” and thus positioned the Japanese and Koreans within this binary discourse of superior and inferior (Louie 9). Oda is able to expose the gender oppression of Korean soldiers in their attempt to negotiate their social place within the military. However, Kon is ultimately the one who resists this connotation as a weak, inferior soldier due to his heritage by fighting the Americans to his death. While Nakamura professed that “we’ve been given as the place we’re to die the most important spot. It’s a great honor. We’ll fight to the death” (Oda 52), Nakamura disregards his own ideologies and becomes a prisoner of war. Nakamura’s character symbolizes the Japanese Imperial Army and his own capture highlights the fact that the Japanese Imperial Army ultimately was hypocritical in their own policy of a masculine ideology of the glory and honor of war. Kon’s ambivalent sacrifice echoes the commitment to resist the emasculating of the Japanese Imperial Army by Korean soldiers.

Oda Makoto portrayal of Kon in relation to Nakamura provides the reader with an alternative view of the history of Korean participation in the Japanese Imperial Army. Oda positions Kon as a capable soldier and undermines the racial and masculine thought of Japanese superiority. Through this project, Oda is able to create new “myths” in relation to the dominant “myths” of ethnic participation in the Japanese Imperial Army. Ben Halpern describes the creation of myth and ideology through the process of history:

1. The study of myth is a study of the origin of beliefs out of historic experience. The study of ideology is a study of the moulding [sic] of beliefs by social situations. 2. The social function of myth is to bind together social groups as wholes or, in other words, to establish a social consensus. The social function of ideology is to segregate and serve special interests” (Halpern 137).

*The Breaking Jewel* serves as a literary form of resistance in which Oda is contesting the marginalized space of Korean men through a racialized masculine lens. The novel challenges the established perspective of Japanese militarism during World War II by inserting a minority presence into the center of the discussion. By affording a voice to an otherized Korean colonial subject, Oda is consciously reclaiming the agency of Korean subjects, which reflects upon his own activist work in Oda’s personal life.

Chang-Rae Lee’s *A Gesture Life* is a fictional account of a Korean man passing as Japanese who reflects upon his involvement in the Japanese Imperial Army while living in a suburb in the United States. His memory of his time in the Japanese Imperial Army haunts his own relationship with his adopted Korean daughter. The novel is an attempt to display the inner workings of transnational bodies and their negotiation with a war that not only propelled the subject to commit horrendous crimes but also to resist the hegemonic structure of the Japanese Imperial Army. The protagonist is Doc Hata who is a Korean man who identifies solely as Japanese and the novel documents his participation in the Japanese Imperial Army. In terms of citizenship, Hata describes himself as “firstly, I am a Japanese” but through his interactions with Korean comfort woman, he begins to come into internal conflict (Lee 95). Although Hata is a self-identified Japanese, his ideologies of Japanese superiority is largely due to his adoption by Japanese parents. Even though he was raised by Japanese parents, “particularly boys in the school I attended after being adopted by the Kurohatas, boys who treated me with

disadain most of the time and...each day I vowed to wreak vengeance upon them” (Lee 263). Hata begins to befriend one of the comfort women who is distinguished as K. The comfort women were mostly women of racial minority descent who were forced into prostitution as a form of sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army. Their relationship catches the interest of Captain Ono, a very proud Japanese who supports the idea of a pure superior bloodline of the Japanese (Lee 268), and begins to probe Hata’s true intentions with the comfort woman K.

Ultimately, K kills Captain Ono by slicing his throat with a scalpel, and Hata is torn between protecting K the Korean or fulfilling his duty as a Japanese soldier by alerting the authorities outside (Lee 300). Hata chooses to side with K and his choice underscores his true intentions of citizenship. Even though Hata is raised and trained to be a Japanese soldier, his connection to his Korean heritage brings him to question his true loyalty to the Japanese Emperor. Hata confesses that “most all of us were ethnic Koreans, though we spoke and lived as Japanese, if ones in twilight” (Lee 72). By masking the murder of Captain Ono, Hata inadvertently supports the Korean resistance to the Japanese colonial presence by allowing K to avoid punishment of her actions.

Besides Hata’s negotiations between his citizenship and nationality, the idea of masculinity is quite prevalent in the novel due to the sexualization of the Korean comfort women as outlets for the Japanese soldiers to prove their masculine heterosexuality. The Korean comfort women were “quite valuable, after all, to the well-being and morale of the camp” (Lee 166). However, Hata seems to be the only Japanese soldier in his regiment who objects to having sex with the comfort women. His fellow comrades question Hata by asking him “why don’t you join us tonight? What is it? Are you not so

fond of women? You can tell me” (Lee 106). By choosing not to sleep with the comfort women, Hata’s masculine heterosexuality comes under attack. Having sex with the comfort women “came to be viewed as one of the benefits of military life, a necessary evil to ensure that men were able to perform on the battlefield (Low 92). Hata’s refusal to sleep with the comfort women undermined his fighting prowess and his masculinity as a capable soldier. Besides Hata, a soldier by the name of Corporal Endo is questioned to be homosexual and the reaction of the other Japanese soldiers fosters the sense that any form of sexual difference was a detriment to the success of the regiment. A captain approaches Hata about the homosexuality of Corporal Endo and “asked [Hata] if in [his] opinion he was a threat to the other men, like a contagion that should be checked” (Lee 158). Although Hata does not identify as homosexual, he uses his position as an officer to protect Endo and begins to become his confidant.

Through their homosocial relationship,<sup>43</sup> a masculinist bond between men at the expense of blatant misogyny and the exploitive treatment of women (Fujitani’s *The Masculinist Bonds of Nation and Empire* 135), Hata resists the masculinist discourse by associating himself with a perceived homosexual. Moreover, Hata’s interest in the comfort woman K is quite illuminating in that Hata becomes masculine through his actions of shielding K from the sexual violence of the other Japanese soldiers. Even though Hata does not use his sexual prowess to solidify the imagined Japanese masculine heterosexuality, his actions reveal an alternative masculine discourse in standing up for his own Korean people. The oppression of women and their bodies “has been a

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<sup>43</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick coined the term “homosocial” in her book *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, which described all male bonds ranging from overtly heterosexual to overtly homosexual.

significant part of being a man in Japan, and the wartime use of women as sex slaves shows the extreme forms of this oppression could take” (Low 91). However, Hata assumes a different masculinity that has no trace of homosociality of the Japanese soldiers<sup>44</sup> with the body of the comfort women by not supporting the dominant masculine heterosexuality discourse within the Japanese Imperial Army.

Similarly to Oda, Chang-Rae Lee portrays his protagonist, Hata, in a manner that grants his marginalized character agency in resisting his racialized masculinity in the Japanese Imperial Army. Through the utilization of alienation, which Lee is interested in: “I’m fascinated by people who find themselves in positions of alienation or some kind of cultural dissonance and who are thinking about how they fit in” (Chang-Rae Lee’s Biography on the Princeton University website<sup>45</sup>), Hata is a vehicle for Koreans broken by the aftermaths of World War II. The novel depicts the trauma of World War II and the emotional and psychological scars on the minority participants especially Hata. Through the character of Hata, Lee incites humanity in the historical memory of Korean colonial subjects and provides a forum to discuss the experiences of Korean participation in a transnational context.

John Young Sohn’s memoir chronicles his experiences in the Imperial Japanese Army as a Korean Gakuhei, which refers to those who “volunteered” to fight for the Japanese Emperor during World War II. His involvement in the Imperial Japanese Army sheds new insights on the attitudes of military life and questions dominant Japanese ideals. However, Sohn explicitly states that his memoir should not serve as yet another

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<sup>44</sup> We must be aware not to attribute or create an image that all Japanese soldiers were committing sexual violence. There were other documented Japanese soldiers who did not participate in having sex with the comfort women (Ruff-O’Herne 97-101).

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.princeton.edu/admission/whatsdistinctive/facultyprofiles/lee/>



“criticism of Japan, particularly the pre-Second World War Japan, because I am not trying to contribute to Japan bashing, per se. I simply want to leave a record of some of my experiences in a frank and as vivid manner as possible” (7). Although a commendable gesture, Sohn’s memoir still reads as an account of Japanese hostility toward Korean colonized subjects and his own grappling and subversion of Japanese ideologies.

The entire dilemma of “volunteering” for the Imperial Japanese Army forced Sohn and other Korean Gakuhei in a dubious situation that created backlashes from both sides—Japanese military officials and his Korean community. During the ceremony to sign the “volunteer” papers, Sohn and his fellow Korean classmates worth was questioned by the Japanese Army officials: “Fill in the paper if you think you are Japanese” (36). Sohn knew that he was not Japanese, but the Japanese officials berated him for hesitating by exclaiming, “If you are a faithful subject of the *Kokoku* (the Empire of Heaven), then you should volunteer” (36). To further exacerbate the situation, one of the officials, Lieutenant Kawabata, “swung his long Japanese sword back and forth, shouting, “Those who do not volunteer aren’t Japanese, and I’ll cut their heads off” (34). Although Kawabata attempts to incite a masculine militaristic vigor into the Korean students, his claims only exposes the fragmentation of Japanese ideologies. For one, the Koreans are colonized subjects and Sohn concludes that the Emperor of Japan “was unable to resolve worldly problems decently and amicably and bring about genuine and lasting peace and never-ending prosperity on earth” and further questions why the Emperor of Japan would “dare carry out mass killings, shameless exploitation, and slavery in Korea and elsewhere” (35). Through this acknowledgement of the Emperor of

Japan and Japanese imperialism, Sohn comprehends the difficult situation experienced by many of his countrymen.

When the Korean population discovered that Koreans were enlisting in the Imperial Japanese Army, Sohn believed that “people would blame me and the others at my school who were forced to volunteer, thinking of us as thoughtless and foolhardy ignoramuses” (51). This fear of betraying his community materialized because the Japanese media published in the newspapers that “all the eligible Korean students at [Sohn’s] college had volunteered” (50). For Sohn, “it was difficult for [him] to meet [their] stare[s]” and placed an insurmountable burden because his own people labeled him a traitor. Thrust into this liminal position, his masculinity was questioned on both sides—be masculine by fighting for Japan or stand up to the imperialism of Japan.

Sohn further documents Governor General Koiso’s oppressive regime in Korea and his policies that directly limited and devalued the worth of the colonized Korean population. Similarly to those Japanese Americans who believed that the straightest line to American citizenship was through the military, Governor General Koiso told the Korean people “he would change policies toward Korea if [Sohn and others] volunteer” but Sohn felt wholeheartedly that “I don’t think he will” (53). By utilizing the site of the military, Koiso pressures Korean men to rise up and protect the interests of the Korean community by “volunteering” for the Imperial Japanese Army. This predicament emasculates the Korean men because it challenges their masculinity by questioning their commitment to join.

John Young Sohn, a Korean Gakuhei pointedly explains in his memoir of strategies to subvert his participation to defend the imperialistic measures of Japan.

When subjected to a military physical, Sohn purposefully “placed a very small amount of lead pencil powder on [his] chest” in order to fake a health ailment and fail the physical (41). Sohn understands the gravity of his actions and acknowledged “it was very risky because if I were caught, I would without a doubt face a terrible consequence” (41). Even though a minimal act of defiance, Sohn small undermining action empowers his marginalized position as a forced “volunteer” for the Imperial Japanese Army. Like Sohn, other Koreans tried to resist by neglecting to “establish independent registers when setting up new households, many did not register women and children, many individuals appeared in more than one registry, and conversely, households in which all members had perished frequently remained on records, resulting in “ghost registers” (Fujitani *Right to Kill* 20). These actions clearly express the ongoing struggle of Koreans to resist their deployment as cannon fodder for the Japanese Imperial Army.

Throughout his entire tenure in the Imperial Japanese Army, Sohn witnesses racialization and emasculation through his own subjugation via physical attacks and dehumanizing verbal abuses. During one situation involving Sohn and another Japanese soldier named Kaneko, Kaneko challenges Sohn to a fight under the pretext that Sohn would be punished for striking a superior officer. Kaneko provokes Sohn by calling him a “coward” and Sohn acknowledges that “it was better for me to be beaten up a few times by him than to fight him because I was not allowed by their military code of conduct to fight with a superior under any circumstance” (147). Sohn’s admittance only reinforces the dejection that the Korean volunteers witness while serving in the Japanese Imperial Army. Furthermore, Kaneko’s own identity as a “superior” Japanese soldier is exposed as false through his need to re-exert his dominance by injuring Sohn, a Korean soldier.

Sohn knows that any form of striking Kaneko would definitely translate into retributions and harsh repercussions and Kaneko also understands the predicament that Sohn is in. During the fight, Kaneko taunts Sohn by asking him “Now you had a taste of my fists, didn’t you?” and the only thing that Sohn says in reply is “Okay” (148). This simple response echoes the underpinning sentiment of Korean volunteers: Their need to survive dire circumstances ranging from verbal and physical abuses because of their racialized masculinity.

During a *kendou* practice (martial arts with a *katana* or sword), Kaneko challenges Sohn to a duel, which ultimately leads to Sohn seeking revenge for his physical assault. From the onset of the *kendou* match, “it was clear...that he underestimated [Sohn’s] *kendou* skill. It seemed that [Kaneko] did not think that [Sohn], a Korean, could possibly do *kendou* as well as [Kaneko] could” (150). This preconceived notion of Sohn’s inferior fighting skills provides a prime example of the emasculation of Korean colonial soldiers. During the duel, Sohn delivered physical blows and “struck down on his head as hard as [Sohn] could” (150). The match culminated in the successful retaliation for Sohn’s humiliation and incident prompted Kaneko to “never bother [Sohn] again after that” (151). Although Sohn projects a hypermasculine behavior towards Kaneko in order to re-establish his own masculinity, Sohn confesses that he believes Kaneko to be “chivalrous.” This recognition by Sohn complicates this contestation of masculinity because although it follows a hypermasculine trajectory like Kon in *The Breaking Jewel*, Sohn respects Kaneko as an equal soldier. This admiration for Kaneko accentuates Sohn’s own struggle to cope in the Japanese Imperial Army as a perceived subordinate soldier. Though exerting his fighting prowess, Sohn’s reveals his

humanity, which creates a masculinity that is founded upon the caring of others. Through the concern for Kaneko, Sohn destroys the hierarchy that is evident between Koreans and Japanese in the Japanese Imperial Army by not flaunting his own masculinity over Kaneko's Japanese masculinity.

While Sohn rises within the military ranks and becomes a non-commissioned officer, the other Japanese officers view Sohn as not only a threat to their own masculinity and racial superiority but also a larger attack of the dominance of the Japanese Empire. Sohn mentored his fellow soldiers, even Japanese soldiers, in their memorization of the code of conduct, which inevitably caused a backlash by the Japanese superior officers. Many of the Japanese reservists had a difficult time in absorbing the lessons of combat because they were older men who were forced to fill the growing demand of manpower (137). The Japanese superior officers discovered Sohn's assistance and were infuriated because it undermined the constructed myth of Japanese superiority over Koreans. Furthermore, the Japanese soldiers under Sohn's command viewed him in a better light than the other Japanese officers (139). Under this condition, Sohn, a Korean colonial soldier, was teaching other Japanese soldiers, which indicated that Sohn was a more capable soldier than his Japanese counterpart (139), and thus fragmenting the notion of Japanese superiority over the "lesser" Asian nations.

Through the literary texts, Oda Makoto and Chang-Rae Lee grant Korean colonial soldiers with some form of agency in order to resist the hegemonic constructions of race, gender identity and citizenship. From sacrificing one's life in the refusal to accept Japanese nationalism and protecting a fellow Korean comfort woman from the perils of an oppressive Japanese masculine heterosexuality, Korean colonial soldiers found ways

to resist marginalized positions. The two novels serve as forms of contestation for the two authors to comment on the legacy and longevity of discrimination towards Koreans in Japan through the lens of race and masculinity. For John Young Sohn, his memoir contributes to the struggle to give visibility to the experiences of Korean participation during World War II. Although there is a paradox of supporting the dominant cause while trying to maintain the agency and independence of minority voices, these military bodies were extremely important in the undermining of the oppressive ideologies of Japan.

“Middle-Men” Identity: Korean Colonial Soldiers and Prisoners of War Camps

Through the process of a structural racial hierarchy, Korean colonial subjects within the Imperial Japanese Army occupied a middle ground between the Japanese soldiers and Allied prisoners of war. This practice of positioning the Korean soldier as an “other” privileged the Japanese soldiers by re-affirming their superiority in prisoners of war camps where the imprisoned were both Korean soldiers<sup>46</sup> and Allied POWs. The Allied soldiers were literally imprisoned because of their enemy affiliation but the Koreans found themselves in a particularly liminal position. The very Korean soldiers who were thrust to protect the Japanese Empire through their involvement in the prisoners of war camp were also imprisoned because of their status as colonial subjects. This section will specifically extrapolate the various measures in which Korean colonial soldiers were forced into and prosecuted for their collaboration with the Japanese within the confinements of the camps. Furthermore, some Korean colonial soldiers were incarcerated because of their subversion and treachery against their Japanese oppressors. Through their experiences as “middle men,” their involvement in the prison system was a vital space where their racial and gendered identities were contested.

The particular texts that I will examine include cultural texts and personal narratives. In order to weave a cohesive viewpoint of the experiences of Korean colonial soldiers and their presence in Allied prisoners of war camps and being prisoners of war of the Imperial Japanese army, I will examine the film *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*

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<sup>46</sup> When I mention that Korean colonial soldiers were “imprisoned” in the prisoners of war camps, they were not actually “imprisoned” because they were utilized as guards. However, they were “imprisoned” because the Korean colonial soldier presence in the camps were largely due to the coercion of the Imperial Japanese Army needing more bodies for their war campaign.

(1983), directed by Nagisa Oshima, and the voices of Korean colonial soldiers. *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* chronicles the relationship between a British officer, Jack Celliers, and a Japanese officer, Captain Yonoi, in an Allied prisoners of war camp during World War II. The film particularly examines the bond between the two officers, but I want to specifically interrogate a smaller incident dealing with a Korean colonial guard in the prison camp.

The motion picture *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* problematizes the existence and deployment of Korean colonial soldiers to the frontlines in the Pacific. In the beginning of the movie, the audience is introduced to a Korean colonial soldier accused of sexual assault of a Dutch prisoner of war. The Japanese sergeant in charge of the matter, Sergeant Hara takes it upon himself to force the Korean guard to perform *seppuku*, the honorable ritual disembowelment. To the extent that this Korean guard personifies the sexual treachery present within the prisoner of war camp, the elimination of him is paramount to Sergeant Hara. However, the Korean guard performs a botched suicide and is spared momentarily by Captain Yonoi, the presiding commander of the camp. Ultimately, the Korean guard is silenced by a second *seppuku* that proves successful and along with his death, follows the further maintenance of the perceived heterosexuality of the prison camp.

Through this demonstration, the Korean soldier is implicated in a same-sex and taboo act that at its core is fundamentally a threat to the supposed superiority of the Japanese Empire. However, the Korean “can stand in for the Japanese, thus allowing the sexual act to have an iconic reality without a direct implication of the Japanese subject “behind” this scenario” (Jackson 158). This in turn points to the fact that the Korean



stands in as a buffer, a symbol that diverts any peculiar inquiry to the perceived heterosexual masculinity of the Japanese. In order to maintain the heterosexual masculinity prevalent within the prison camp, Kanemoto is required to commit *seppuku*. During the film, Sergeant Hara comments on the homosexuality in Kanemoto's case by stating that he showed a "samurai compassion" through his proud assertion that "samurai do not fear homosexuality" (*Merry Christmas*). Hara who deliberately carries a sword with him in order to invoke a samurai-like aura is indoctrinated in *bushido* or the way of the samurai. By displaying "samurai compassion" by forcing Kanemoto to commit suicide, Hara simultaneously erases the presence of the Korean colonial soldier while upholding the prestige of the samurai.

This form of Japanese sexuality hinges upon the notion of dominance and hierarchy. Yamamoto Tsunetomo, a retired samurai, wrote a book *Hagakure*, which became the moral instruction to samurai that became the "guiding light," but it was grounded in all aspects of "male being" (Jackson 161). The foundation of *Hagakure* revolved around the identity of manhood and included "homoerotic, which it conceives of as a hypermasculinity. The intermeshing of death, eros, and masculinity in the text is played out in the film from the opening scene" (Jackson 161). Moreover, for the samurai in particular, same sex relations were common, but for same sex relations the men would be split into:

"Roles played by each in the relationship, one taking the role of elder brother (*ani-bun*) and the other taking the role of younger brother (*ototo-bun*). This hierarchy was central to all forms of Japanese male love and presumed a male/superior, female/inferior hierarchy of sexual activity in which the female or boy (inferior) is penetrated by the adult male (superior)" (Saikaku 28).

In the case of the film, the sexual assault by the Korean colonial guard asserts his superiority over the Dutch POW in a violation of the supposed superiority and “masculinity” of the white western body. By claiming a form of agency through a forced sexual act, the Korean colonial guard stands in stark opposition to the Japanese soldiers. Any small act of resistance is viewed as a threat that has the potential of disrupting the continuity of the maintenance of authority of the Japanese captors.

Japanese Americans, too, witnessed the subjugation of Korean colonial soldiers in the Imperial Japanese Army. While Frank “Foo” Fujita, a Japanese American soldier from Texas, was a prisoner of war of the Japanese, he noticed the distinctions and attitudes towards the Korean colonial soldiers. During his time in the prison camps, Fujita recollected that the “meanest and cruelest of the guards were Koreans. The Japanese looked upon them as subhuman and almost any soldier of any rank could beat them up” (Fujita 140). If Fujita was keenly aware of the harsh treatment towards Korean colonial soldiers, the Japanese officers and soldiers did not care to parade their distaste towards their ethnic subjects. For all of this sadistic behavior, Fujita noted that the Koreans “had no resource until they were placed as guards over POWs, and here for the first time in their lives they could beat someone up—and they sure did” (Fujita 140). By subjugating and harassing the Allied POWs, the Korean guards were able to release their anger on another subordinate group. Iwao Peter Sano, a Japanese American from California who was drafted to fight for the Imperial Japanese army, witnessed the discrimination directed to Korean colonial subjects while stationed in Korea. Sano’s commanding officer was disgusted to see Koreans speaking in Korean rather than Japanese and said that, “there are some Japanese who’ll give those young rascals hell for

using that language” (Sano 37). Sano was indoctrinated to believe that Korea was an occupied colony by the Japanese ranging from the actual geographical to the cultural landscape of Korea. Similar to the Korean guard that Fujita describes in his memoir, the Korean guard in *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* utilizes his liminal position within the prison camp to exert a form of sexual violence that was deemed hostile to the masculine sexuality of the camp and the larger Imperial Japanese army. Though the Korean guard in the motion picture is killed due to his forced sexual assault, there were other Korean colonial soldiers who were sentenced and convicted of war crimes due to their affiliation to the Imperial Japanese army.

While forced to execute the wishes of the Japanese command, Korean colonial soldiers were seen as the perpetrators responsible for the inhumane war crimes imposed on the Allied prisoners of war. Of the 240,000 Korean colonial soldiers drafted in the Imperial Japanese Army, 143 were convicted as B/C class war criminals and 23 of them were hanged (Utsumi “Lee Hak Rae...”). Moreover, Utsumi Aiko documented that “the [Japanese] high command for the most part was untouched, many of those with least authority were executed and served long prison sentences” (Introduction to “Lee Hak Rae...”). Those soldiers with the least authority in some cases were Korean colonial subjects pressured to commit the atrocities ordered by their Japanese commanders. The Japanese were the commanders of the prisoners of war camps and the actual guards and maintenance workers were Korean and Taiwanese subjects compelled to work for the Japanese. Therefore, when the POWs were released, their inevitable targets became the Koreans because “their resentment were the civilian military employees whom they had seen on a daily basis and whose names they knew” (Utsumi 211).

Though Korean colonial soldiers played a vital role in the maintenance of prisoners of war camps, in 1944, a small band of Korean colonial soldiers attempted to subvert the cruelty of the Japanese authority, which consequently resulted in their incarceration as prisoners of war. They were prisoners of a Pacific war that were coerced to participate in while any form of resistance was suppressed and punished accordingly. A group of Korean soldiers covertly orchestrated a failed rebellion within the 30<sup>th</sup> Division of the Imperial Japanese Army based in Heijou (present-day Pyongyang, North Korea). The proposal of a rebellion stemmed from the nightly discussions of Korean independence and Japanese defeat by the Korean colonial soldiers. Takayama Jun'ichi, a lieutenant in the Imperial Japanese Army, whose real name was Cheon Sangwha recalled that "every night we talked about our anti-Japanese sentiments and independence for Korea. We had to obey the Japanese army during the day, but at night we were free. Deep in our hearts we prepared to die for Korean independence" (Kiryama "A 1944 Korean Rebellion"). These adamant objectives of the Korean colonial soldiers were established because of the manner in which the Japanese soldiers treated them. Cheon remembers that the Japanese commanders would beat their Korean recruits "everyday for any kind of reason, like a bed not being properly made, or a uniform not being correctly worn" (Kiryama "A 1944 Korean Rebellion").

The Korean colonial soldiers associated with the scheming of the rebellion decided to name their group "The Party of Three Thousand" because it symbolized the population of Korea at the time (The population was thirty million and in Korean, thirty million is written as three thousand ten-thousand) in order to hasten the downfall of the Japan Empire. Cheon recalled that they "decided to try to sabotage the Japanese army

from within, hoping the chaos would help lead to Japan's defeat" (Kiryama "A 1944 Korean Rebellion"). Even though the strategic planning of the affair went smoothly, there was a leak during the process, which eventually led to the capture of the treasonous Korean colonial soldiers.<sup>47</sup>

Cheon Sangwha evaded imprisonment and escaped the prison compound for an entire year while traveling to the border of North Korea and Manchuria. However, Japanese authorities captured him, and his incarceration led to a brutal interrogation and torture. Cheon recollected that

"The tortures inflicted by these two officers were terrible. They beat me wildly all over my head, back, and stomach; wherever they could hit me with a thick bamboo stick. When I fainted they took me to the bathroom and took off my clothes and poured water over me. It was about minus five degrees (Fahrenheit) outside. The handcuffs froze to my skin. They kept me kneeling on the floor with a pole over my calves and thighs. They would then twist my legs almost to the point of breaking. When I passed out, they poured water over me; when I woke, they beat me again, and I passed out once more" (Kiryama "A 1944 Korean Rebellion").

These horrific experiences parallel the similar subjugation of Frank Fujita by the Japanese captors in the prisoners of war camp. Cheon, though a participant in the Imperial Japanese Army, held a similar position as Fujita because he was seen as a traitor to the Japanese Empire. Even though Fujita held an aberrant place due to his Japanese heritage, Cheon was a Korean colonial subject, which gestures to his marginal circumstance where Cheon and his fellow Koreans are imprisoned in both cases—their freedom is curbed to fight a despised war and they are detained for their subversive

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<sup>47</sup> There were many small-scale rebellions and Korean colonial soldiers created anti-Japanese organizations. Utsumi Aiko notes that "It has been said that there was a Japanese plan to shoot all Korean civilian military employees stationed at POW camps, along with the POWs under their charge.... At the very least it is clear that the tensions between Koreans and the Japanese military was at such a high pitch that Koreans felt their lives were in serious danger" ("Korean 'Imperial Soldiers' 209).

actions. For the Korean colonial soldiers involved in the rebellion, twenty-seven members of the Party of Three Thousand were convicted and sentenced to prison.

In addition to the resistance of the planned rebellion, Cheon witnessed interactions present in the army compound that splintered the very notions of Japanese superiority over their Korean “brothers.” During Cheon’s tenure in the Division, he noticed the fact that “the Korean students were from the upper classes [and] were usually physically bigger than the average Japanese soldiers” (Kiryama “A 1944 Korean Rebellion”). This reality challenged the physical dominance of Japanese soldiers, which subsequently ushered Japanese hostility towards Korean colonial soldiers. On one occasion, a Japanese soldier who held the rank of a fourth-degree black belt in judo challenged Cheon to a sumo match. The sumo match ended with Cheon throwing the Japanese soldier to the ground before applying pressure to the soldier’s chest, which resulted in Cheon’s victory. Furthermore, Cheon also acknowledged that on certain occurrences, he heard Japanese soldiers advise to not “hit the Koreans too much because they have more education than we do” (Kiryama “A 1944 Korean Rebellion”). With this gesture that the Korean colonial soldiers were more educated than their Japanese counterpart, the Japanese were quite aware of the erosion of their dominance over their Asian colonial subjects.

Those ethnic Korean colonial soldiers who bravely sought to undermine the Japanese militaristic forces ultimately revealed their capacity to subvert the very notions of their projected inferiority as Korean soldiers. Even though the Japanese authorities successfully quelled the Korean uprising, Cheon understood that they “wished to show our resistance and to demonstrate our valor so that others would follow our path later,”

and “even if our plan was impossible to carry out, it would have been significant if the public had learned about it” (Kiryama “A 1944 Korean Rebellion”). These few, brave Korean colonial soldiers, though unsuccessful in overthrowing an entire Division of the Imperial Japanese army, were able to re-configure the definition of a Korean man.

Korean colonial soldiers involved with the POW institution during World War II provided yet another space for resisting the identities imposed upon them. Though forced to participate in the Japanese war machine as POW guards, Korean colonial soldiers were positioned to be “middle men” in which they were viewed as the sole perpetrators of the war atrocities committed against Allied soldiers. Though pitted between the Japanese commanders and Allied prisoners, their “second-class,” marginalized place stood as yet another reminder of their inferiority as Japanese colonial subjects. However, Korean colonial soldiers were able to recreate the idea of a courageous, intellectual, and athletic Korean man by attempting to subvert the Imperial Japanese Army. Even though the men of The Party of Three Thousand were captured, their plans thwarted, and thrown into prison, they were able to display a brand of heroism unaccustomed to the Japanese. Within the film *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*, the Korean colonial guard resists Japanese domination by attempting to overthrow the sexual balance within the prison system. Though the forced sexual action by the Korean is something that should not be condoned, the Korean colonial guard combats his own subordination within the Imperial Japanese Army his alleged homosexual rape and subsequent suicide can thus be read as acts of resistance, as ways of subverting the ideologies of Japanese superiority and masculinity. In both texts, the Korean POWs’ manhoods, though caged physically, were

uniquely Korean because their actions supported an independent Korea free from the bonds of servitude.



The Legacy of World War II through the lens of Japanese American soldiers and Korean Colonial soldiers

Speaking to the larger question of the intersections of race and masculinity on marginalized communities of men, the effects of World War II marshaled in a new world order dominated by Western, “democratic” Powers. Though Japanese American men were forced to relocate after their release from incarceration camps and reestablish themselves either on the continental United States, Hawaii, or Japan, the experiences of the Japanese American soldiers, draft resisters, and prisoners of war provide spaces where they were able to create empowered spaces in the face of constant racism and emasculation. For Korean colonial subjects, their mistreatment after World War II was indicative of their perpetual role as a subordinate to Japan. However, understanding that Korean colonial subjects were able to create positions where they were not inferior to their Japanese conquerors is an important step to the revitalization of disenfranchised men of color.

Once World War II ended, President Truman said to the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup>, “You fought not only the enemy, you fought prejudice – and you won.” Even though Truman believed that America and the U.S. military should be more inclusive of minority groups and that the men of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> demonstrated their U.S. citizenship, on a more personal level, in 1994 my uncle, Bruce Yamashita, successfully sued the U.S. marines for racial harassment and discrimination. His status as a “Japanese American man” was seen as so inferior by the U.S. marines that they questioned his loyalty as a U.S. citizen and his racialized masculinity. While at Officer Candidate School, Yamashita experienced both racism and emasculating actions by being asked “Why didn’t you just join the Japanese Army?” (Yamashita 61) or being told “You know during World War II,

we whipped your Japanese Ass” (Yamashita 49). Moreover, the instructors taunted Yamashita by asking him “Do you wanna quit!?” (Yamashita 56) and made him purposefully attempt and fail an obstacle course due to his shorter stature<sup>48</sup> (Yamashita 47).

Although 50 years earlier, the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> and Japanese American draft resisters sacrificed their lives to change the U.S.’s perceptions of Japanese Americans, my uncle was forced to follow in their footsteps and fight the ongoing injustices of the U.S. military. Although my uncle was not subjected to taking the same loyalty questionnaire as the Japanese Americans interned during WWII—such as the questions that began this presentation--his experience at OCS was yet another type of loyalty questionnaire to determine the validity of his U.S. citizenship. The U.S. military’s oppressive nature through racism, emasculation, and questioning of citizenship did not end during World War II nor did it end with my uncle’s successful lawsuit in the early 1990s, but it is still omnipresent within the institution of the U.S. military and American society.

The contradictory ideologies of America and Japan during World War II are quite interconnected due to the nature that although both nations denounced racism through the inclusion of minorities into the military, they still maintained racist policies and attitudes towards their racially minority groups. Even though Japanese Americans and Koreans sacrificed their lives for the fulfillment of their acceptance into the dominant society, America and Japan still have retained many of their exclusion/inclusion policies. In the

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<sup>48</sup> At OCS, there are two terrain courses—the “Big Man’s course” and the “Smaller Man’s course.” My Uncle is about 5’7 and the “Big Man’s Course” is for trainees taller than six feet. By subjugating my Uncle to the course, it denigrated his racialized masculinity as inferior and less competent to the white American soldiers.

United States, from the recruitment of African Americans, Chicano/as, Pacific Islanders, and Latino/as into the military, they are indoctrinated that they are participating in extending freedom and democracy, but at the same time, social institutions prevent social mobility for racial minorities in America. In Japan, the remaining Korean soldiers do not receive any pensions or benefits for their involvement in the Japanese Imperial Army and were stripped of their Japanese citizenship. Now, over 600,000 Koreans reside in Japan and must cope with the ongoing discrimination by the larger Japanese society. Ultimately, the legacy of the racist policies of America and Japan against racial minorities is still evident and persistent in today's society even though a half-century ago, Japanese Americans and Koreans sacrificed their lives in order to resist the marginalization of the dominant society.

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